

Putting your best foot forward

Choosing the correct running shoes from the hundreds of brands and styles available has never been more difficult. The final choice, however, will play a major part in the performance of the modern marathon runner – and can also be a vital consideration in minimising the risk of serious injury

Laces: Tight at top to hold shoe firmly in place, looser at toe

Insole: Provides additional cushioning and absorbs moisture to prevent blistering

Toe box: Should protect toes but allow room for movement to avoid blisters and damage to toenails

Heel tab: Should be low and soft to avoid injury to Achilles tendon

Heel counter: Must support heel and prevent sideways movement inside shoe

Midsole: The most important area of shoe's shock absorption. Lightweight but hardwearing – may be filled with air or gel

Toe: Sole curves up at front to let the shoe 'roll'

Sole: Strong rubber, shallow pattern to give maximum grip

Finding the right shoes

Bare footprints reveal foot type and help in selecting correct shoes

1 – High-arched rigid foot:

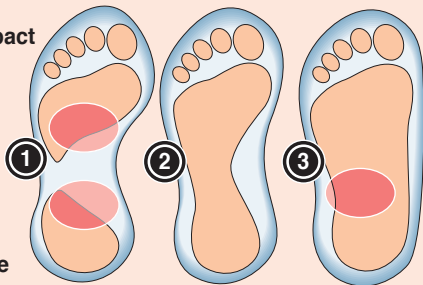
Arches do not absorb shock of impact as feet hit ground. Risk of injury to feet, shins, hips and lower back as shock travels up legs

2 – Neutral foot:

Widest range of choice for shoes as less support is needed

3 – Flat, flexible foot:

Good absorption of shock but foot rolls inwards on impact – excessive 'rolling' can cause knee injuries



Areas needing particular support