

Monthly Wellness Update

*Courtesy of
Advanced Rehabilitation Clinics, Inc
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Running Shoes 101

As the temperature begins to rise and the days get longer, many people shake the dust off their running shoes and hit the pavement. But before returning to your pre-winter mileage, following a few simple suggestions will help you to ease back into the season safely and without injury.

The first thing to consider is the pair of shoes you are pulling out of the back of the closet. Generally, a shoe is good for 200-400 miles before it should be replaced. Depending on the mileage you put in last year, a new pair may be warranted. When purchasing a new pair of running shoes, going to reputable running store or bringing your shoes to a physical therapist is a must for proper fit.

Knowing a few important shoe terms will help determine which type of shoe is best for your foot. The shape of the shoe is called the last. It is either straight, curved or semi-curved. The flexibility of the shoe is also important. Grab at the end of the shoe and push up, if the shoe bends beyond the ball of where your foot would be, it is too flexible. There are two main types of an outsole, and which one you choose depends on the surface you mostly run on. A blown rubber outsole is best if you run mostly on asphalt or concrete. The midsole (the area between the outsole and the upper part of the shoe) may be the most important part of your shoe. The two primary materials used are ethylene vinyl acetate (EVA) and polyurethane (PU). EVA is lightweight and provides excellent shock absorption but breaks down more quickly than PU, which is more durable but not as cushioning. Finally, the area where your toes fits into, the toe box, should fit your toes comfortably and without excessive pressure or movement in any particular place, which may cause blisters.

Now that you know a little bit more about shoes, you need to learn more about your foot. Stand in front of a full length mirror in your bare feet. If your feet look relatively flat on the ground, your are likely pronator. If you can see a high arch, then you are termed a supinator. If the arch of your foot is not excessively high or low, you have a neutral foot. The type of shoe you choose will depend a lot on which category you fall into. Runners who are pronators should look for a motion control shoe that has a straight last and medial midsole stabilization device. The type of midsole is dependent on your body weight (i.e. EVA if you are light for your frame and PU if you are heavy or have a large body frame). If you are a supinator, a more curved last with EVA midsole material is more important. A neutral foot runner should look for a semi-curved last with a midsole material depending again on body weight. If you use either custom or over the counter orthotics, you should look for a shoe that has a removable insole so that you will have room for them.

In addition to all of these tips, try on several different types of shoes. Do not necessarily look at brand or price. Find several shoes that are appropriate for your foot type and walk around in them. They should feel comfortable immediately and not need to be “broken in.” Finding the proper shoe may mean the difference between a happy and healthy running season and injury.

Following these few simple tips will help improve your running and provide you with a more efficient and effective training season, whether you are running for fun or training for a marathon.

For more information please feel free to stop by Advanced Rehabilitation Clinics, Inc. located inside the Lifestart Wellness Center or to get a free assessment, where they will evaluate your condition and advise you of your options.

Next Month: Beginning Running 101

www.arcphysicaltherapy.com

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