

## **Watch your feet!**

As a runner or walker if your feet aren't happy then you're not happy. Stiff toes, corns, blisters, aching arches – none of these will help. If you're running 40 miles a week then you're probably going to get some foot/toe discomfort, just from the ground you're covering. However you can minimise it or perhaps eliminate it altogether by paying attention to your footwear. Multiple research studies have demonstrated that well designed and fitting running shoes can reduce the number of overuse injuries. So how do you pick the shoe that's right for you? Here's what you **shouldn't** do :

- Buy the same brand or make every time
- Pick the most expensive shoe in the shop
- Go for the shoe your friend recommends
- Wait until your runner is falling apart before you buy a new pair
- Go straight into a heavy training session with a new shoe

It's important to remember that everybody's foot is different. What's good for a flat foot will not suit a high arched foot. You can look at your feet yourself and see what sort of an arch you have. When you step out of the shower put your foot down on a towel or a dry tile. Look at the footprint. Can you see almost the whole sole of your foot? If so you have a flat foot. Or is just the outside border of the sole visible? If this is the case then you have a high arched foot. If you are not sure or if you have other issues such as bunions or bent toes consult your local Chartered Physiotherapist or podiatrist for advice.

As a rule of thumb if you have a high arched foot you need a soft spongy trainer with a lot of shock absorbancy built in. And if you have a flat foot you need a firm supportive trainer. If there is a trained fitter in your local sports store they should be able to guide you in the right direction. Often however the staff are simply salespeople. Your local Chartered Physiotherapist or podiatrist will know where to send you to have the appropriate shoe fitted for your type of foot.

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