

## Feet first: Before you ramp up running, treat your feet

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Fall is the perfect time to indulge in the great outdoors. We will run on our favorite trails or neighborhood streets. Before pounding the pavement, consider your feet and what they need to perform at an optimum level and remain injury free.

### Shoe sense

A basic running shoe is versatile for many running surfaces and has an approximate lifespan of 500 miles if you use the shoe for running only. Once it loses support and cushioning properties, you are more prone to injury. Most runners train on pavement or well manicured trails which easily accommodate a road training shoe.

*Assuring adequate fit is vital.* Visit a local running store where sales staff, who are likely to be experienced runners, measure your foot and assess your foot and ankle functionality. One place to look is the Store Locator at [www.runnersworld.com](http://www.runnersworld.com).

*Wait until the end of your day to try on any footwear.* During the day, feet begin to swell, which best represents what happens during your runs. Because of swelling, regular long distance runners (three to six miles) should buy about a half size larger. However, too much room can cause excessive friction leading to blisters.

### General shoe types

About 90% of consumers find the right shoe in one of these two categories.

**Neutral Cushioned Shoes**—Maximum cushioning, minimum arch-side support. Best for runners with moderate to high arches.

**Stability Shoes**—For runners who need arch-side support and good midsole cushioning and want to address moderate pronation.

### Specialty shoe types

**Motion Control Shoes**—For overpronators. Also suited for big or heavy runners with very low arches.

**Performance Training Shoes**—A light, well-balanced shoe suitable for racing, speed work, or daily training. Best suited for fast, efficient runners. Can be a complement to an everyday training shoe.

### Don't forget socks!

A good sock is breathable, will not bunch in the shoe, and features a wicking fabric aimed

at drawing moisture away from the foot. "No show" socks have become popular in gyms; be careful to choose one that will not slip into the shoe over the course of a long run.

### Stretch factor

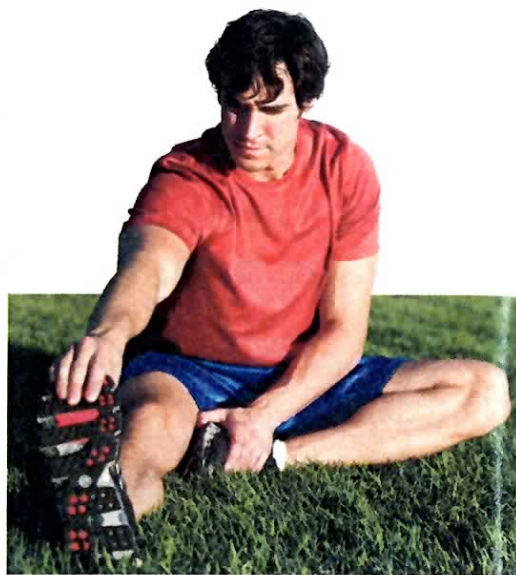
Whether you are a long-time distance runner, a weekend warrior or someone committed to routine maintenance for cardiovascular health, you must stretch. Warming up is vital to increase blood flow to the extremities and raise body temperature prior to activity. Individual stretching routines should incorporate static stretches where you hold a particular position for 30 seconds. Most running injuries are avoidable with good static stretching. Injury-prone areas such as the Achilles tendon and the plantar fascia are important and can be addressed with a simple calf stretching exercise. Athletes should stretch for at least 10 minutes before their activity.

### Pain on the pavement

**While running, you can experience a wide array of problems and discomfort, which may include:**

- ▣ **Tightness on the top of the instep, commonly caused by the laces tied too tight.**
- ▣ **Dull pains on the top of the feet, which can be stress fractures from increasing your mileage too quickly.**
- ▣ **Tight heel cords and lower extremity musculature can lead to overuse injuries such as plantar fasciitis and Achilles tendonitis, which can be avoided by stretching and starting off slowly.**

Some experts claim that dynamic stretching, which takes place while the body is in motion doing things like jumping jacks or lunges, will increase power, flexibility and range of motion. Immediately prior to exercise, athletes should consider some dynamic stretching to loosen up tendons and tissues and increase blood flow. Cooling down during and after athletic activity should include a shorter stretching routine depending on your sport.



**If you get injured, seek medical attention and remember R.I.C.E.**

- ▣ **Rest**
- ▣ **Ice**
- ▣ **Compress**
- ▣ **Elevate**



**For more details, link to *Stretching: The Truth*, New York Times, 10/31/08, online at [www.sigep.org/journal](http://www.sigep.org/journal).**