Second Wind Running Club

Beginning Women's Running Group

Running Shoes - Fit & Buying Tips

Running shoes don't need to be broken in. They are made of synthetic materials that don't stretch, and the cushioning is ready to go, so they fit "right out of the box". *The way they fit the first time is the way they are always going to fit.*

Running shoes are used for running, so they need to be roomier than a regular shoe. Why? Remember the force of heel strike… each foot does this 500 TIMES EACH MILE, so your feet tend to spread out.

Keys to the Right Fit:

1. You should have about a thumb's width of room at the toe. If you can't wiggle your toes, then move up to the next size.
2. The shoe should hold your foot securely around the midfoot (arch and instep) and at the heel, with little or no slipping.
3. The shape of the shoe should match the shape of the foot.

What's Your Size?

Because sizing varies from shoe model to model, you might find shoes differing by up to 1½ sizes in a runner's closet, yet they all fit! The shoes all look the same size… only the number on the shoebox is different.

Bigger is Better!!

If you aren't sure of which size to buy, it's nearly always better to choose the larger size because much more can be done to fine-tune the fit:

1. Change to a thicker sock.
2. Add a replacement insole, which are thicker and more durable than standard insoles.
3. Adjust the lacing to snug up the fit.

If a shoe is too small, there's not much you can do. Since running shoes don't stretch, the only option is to try a thinner sock.

Each manufacturer has its own last (or foot form) that gives the shoe its shape. There are 2 main differences:

1. Volume: (high or low) - some shoes have more space at the mid-foot to accommodate a high instep. Others have less room than average and are better matches for a low instep.
2. Curve: some people have feet almost as straight as a ski; others are almost as curved as a banana. Shoes vary nearly as much. The amount of curve is usually linked to running mechanics.

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Shoe shape vs. running mechanics:

 LOW	**Motion control**: excessive over-pronators in addition to low arches, generally have rather straight feet. This foot type means that you have an extremely flexible arch or no arch at all (flat feet). This means you probably have a very inward foot strike pattern. You probably roll your feet to the inside severely when you walk or run. Examples of Motion control shoes: Asics Foundation Plus, Brooks Beast, Brooks Addiction, Saucony Grid Stabil, New Balance M587.
 MEDIUM	**Stability**: the majority of people have some curve in their feet. This foot type means that you have a slightly flexible arch and you probably have a moderately inward foot strike pattern. You may roll your feet to the inside when you walk or run. Examples of Stability shoes: Asics 2100, Asics Kayano, Brooks Adrenaline, Brooks Axiom, Nike Structure Triax, Mizuno Wave Alchemy.
 HIGH	**Cushion**: efficient/underpronators tend to have feet more curved than average to go with their high arches. This foot type means that you have a strong arch. This means you probably have a very natural foot strike pattern. You probably tend to roll your feet to the outside when you walk or run. Examples of Cushion shoes: Asics Cumulus, Asics Nimbus, Brooks Radius, Nike Pegasus, Mizuno Wave Rider, Saucony Grid Trigon.

To ensure you purchase the correct shoe for your feet and for your purposes you should go to a store that specializes in running. Specialty stores have knowledgeable staff to evaluate your running needs. The Staff at Body N' Sole ,1317 Dunlap Ave., Savoy (near Pages for All Ages) will observe your foot type as well as your foot strike pattern using a treadmill and digital video camera in the gait analysis center in order to find you a great shoe.

The above information was modified from the following websites:
http://www.bodynsolesports.com/
http://www.roadrunnersports.com/

http://www.secondwindrunningclub.org/