



Athletic Shoes

Check your shoes regularly. Look over and replace your shoes regularly. Checking and changing your shoes is one of the best ways to reduce the chance of injury. Check all parts of your shoes for wear. Make sure the outsole is not worn through. Make sure that the heel counter is not tilted in or out. Check for holes worn by the pressure of your toes.

Select socks carefully. Consider socks made of synthetic fibers that keep moisture away from your feet. They may work better for you than cotton socks.

Choose a shoe designed specifically for the activity you will be doing. Each activity and sport has a different impact on your feet and legs because of the different ways that your feet and legs move. To lessen the chance of injuries, get a shoe specific to each sport you participate in.

Here are guidelines for buying new athletic shoes:

1. Purchase at a store that specializes in athletic shoes and has a good reputation in your community. Ask at the gym, or ask a sports medicine professional.
2. Wear the same type of sock to the store that you use for the sport or activity. If you use an insert or orthotic, bring that to the store with you. Some experts suggest you bring old athletic shoes with you to the store; they can provide information about fit and stress points.
3. Try on athletic shoes after a workout or run, or at the end of the day. Your feet will be at their largest.
4. Have your feet measured each time you purchase shoes. As you age, your foot size may gradually change. Shoe manufacturers sometimes make changes to a shoe that are not obvious when you look at it. Even if you have purchased what looks like the identical shoe in the past, it is still essential to try shoes on and walk around in them.
5. Look for these things when deciding if the shoe fits:
 - You need the width of your index finger between your longest toe and the end of the shoe.
 - When the shoe is on your foot, you should be able to freely wiggle all of your toes.
 - The shoe should bend at the ball of your foot where your toes actually bend.
 - The shoe should fit firmly around your heels. Your heels should not slip as you walk or run.
 - The shoes should be comfortable as soon as you try them on, without a break-in period.
6. Wear the shoe for at least 10 minutes in the store to see how it feels. If you are buying running shoes, run a few steps too. They should be comfortable.
7. Check the shoe for defects. Examine the exterior of the shoe for tears or other problems. Place the shoes on a level counter and make sure the shoes line up evenly and that the heel is straight.

And finally, don't wear new shoes or socks for a long walk or in a race! Take your old socks and shoes along instead, or plan ahead and wear the new ones for a few weeks in advance.

This information is taken from the websites www.orthoinfo.aaos.org of the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, and from www.aapsm.org, of the American Academy of Podiatric Sports Medicine. More detailed information is available at both of these websites.