

**Tip of the Month:** *How to select the proper athletic shoe-Avoiding plantar fasciitis, shin splints knee, hip and back problems. What about Orthotics?*

Submitted by:

Dr. Jeff Hartwell of Hartwell Chiropractic and Wellness Center. 503-266-2997

The #1 rule to keep in mind is “function outweighs fashion”. No matter how “cool” or “cute” a shoe may appear, the fit and purpose of a particular shoe needs to be the main factor in which pair to purchase.

The type of foot you have should determine the type of shoe you wear. If your foot has a high, and rigid arch, you need a more flexible, cushioned and curved shoe. If your foot is extra flexible and your arch drops excessively (over-pronation) you should wear a motion- control shoe that has a straight or semi-curved sole. Most people have a semi flexible foot with a medium high arch and should use semi-curved stability shoes that offer a good blend of cushioning and support.

Buy shoes at the end of the day when your feet are somewhat larger from the day’s walking. (1 finger width, or half an inch from tip of shoe to longest toe). It’s better to buy shoes slightly too big than too small.

The midsole of the shoe can wear out before the shoe looks worn enough to replace. This is often when pain can start to develop in the arch (plantar fasciitis) or the knee (pes anserine tendonitis) or at the hip (ischial gluteal bursitis or sacroiliac dysfunction) or in the lower back (disc or facet inflammation). It’s a good idea to rotate 2 pairs of shoes to make both last longer.

Many people benefit from orthotics (custom designed shoe inserts) to allow the foot to strike the ground properly and cause shock absorption to occur at the arch instead of higher up the leg. These can be fit by a podiatrist, orthopedist, or chiropractor.

I normally recommend that patients buy athletic shoes from a store that specializes in them like Pace-setter Athletic or Portland Running Co. where trained staff will actually watch you run with different shoes on to make sure they are correct for your unique feet. We offer custom orthotic fitting for both casual, and athletic use at a very affordable price.