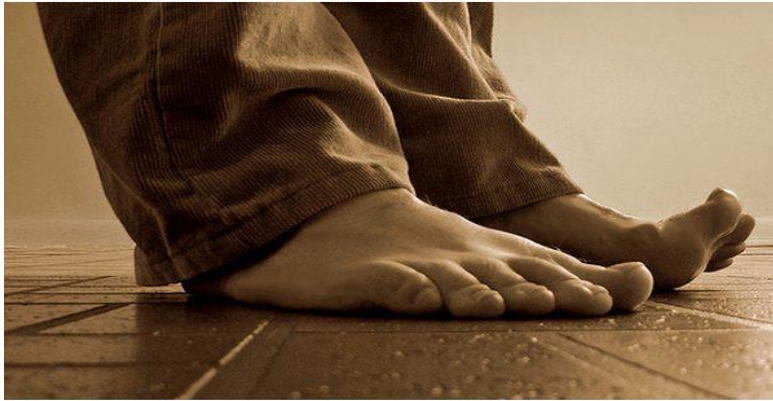


Why Is It Important to Wear Good Walking Shoes?

By Anna-Sofie Hickson



Wearing proper walking shoes is a fundamental element in maintaining the correct walking technique, as well as preventing injury. Shoes are tools. Without the correct tools, you are likely to hurt yourself, making you more prone to suffer further and more severe injuries in the future. Selecting the right shoe for your foot type may be a basic concept to some, yet walkers often overlook this simple step, and as a result, suffer from preventable injuries.

Shoes and Your Body

Biomechanics refers to the internal and external forces of the human body, and the manner in which these forces affect the human body. This means every movement that your foot makes in the act of walking affects other parts of your body. If your shoes don't provide the necessary support for the arches and heels, they prevent essential range of motion in the foot. When your feet are not able to function properly, other parts of your body must overcompensate. When your body overcompensates, it is common to suffer from pain in the heels, ankles, knees, hips and lower back. The pain in these joints can then lead to weakness and further injury.

Shoes and Endurance

Being comfortable while you walk affects your distance, speed and endurance. Continuing your routine of walking depends greatly on the benefits you gain; no one wants to walk any distance, speed or amount of time while you are uncomfortable or in pain. You need to find a shoe that fits your individual foot. If you have the correct shoes, you can preserve a healthy and injury-free walking schedule.

The Right Shoes

Finding the right shoes is surprisingly easy. Most shoe stores offer a free foot analysis by staff that are trained to advise you of the best type of shoe for you. Another option for determining which shoe is most suitable for you is to have a podiatrist or a sports medicine expert evaluate your foot type and the specific needs of shoes for your foot type. Generally, these professionals assess your feet by determining the needs for your arch and heel support.

Cost

Paying for the proper shoes can be costly. You may pay more for a shoe that is tailored for your specific foot type, but the price you'll pay does not compare with the cost you would have to disburse for injuries. Buying the correct shoes impacts the way in which your entire body is able to function without unnecessary injury or pain; therefore, paying a higher price for shoes is a valuable investment in the overall health and performance of your body.

Replacing Your Shoes

Replacing your shoes on a regular basis is important for staying free of injury and pain. According to the American Academy of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, you should replace your shoes every 350 to 400 miles, or about every six months. The midsole is the part of shoe sole between the bottom of the shoe and the upper part of the shoe. The utility of the midsole can decrease due to inclement weather, excessive weight and terrain.