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PHYSICAL THERAPY SERIES

Selecting A Running Shoe

Prepared for: GPRC Wolves X-Country Running Team
 Prepared by: Brian Sherk, Physical Therapist

Important Considerations:

Shoes are more than just looks and color!

It is important to remember that the selection of running shoe for any individual depends on many factors including: foot classification, foot-ankle-leg alignment, foot-ankle mobility, bio-mechanical factors, and most importantly comfort; however, no shoe will totally protect a runner from injury. When looking to buy a new pair of runners please consider talking with your running coach or an appropriate health professional if you have questions or concerns. It is also strongly recommended to try your pair of runners first for fit and comfort. Always take a look at your feet after for any signs of blistering (i.e. red, warm areas).

Every foot should pronate and supinate to provide shock absorption as well as rigidity for a powerful push-off. You can do a quick check to test your own feet to give yourself an idea of which footwear may be best!

You should check your arch under 4 conditions: Standing, partial squat, single leg standing, and single leg partial squat. Remember to check both feet as they may be different.

Feet will generally fall into 3 categories flat footed (pes planus), neutral, and high arched (pes cavus). If you can fit the middle three fingers into your arch, up to the first skin fold, consider your arch as "neutral". If you can fit your fingers past the first skin fold you have a high arch. If you can not fit your fingers under your arch then you are flat footed.

Running Shoe Types:

Light Cushion

- ~ **Indicated for individuals with high ridges arches**
- ~ Typically more of a curved last shape
- ~ Single Density midsole
- ~ Very flexible through the mid-foot

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- ~ Midsole cushioning units (rear-foot and forefoot)

Straight Last Cushion

- ~ **Indication: Neutral foot**

- ~ Straight last shape
- ~ Single Density midsole
- ~ Midsole cushioning units (rear-foot and forefoot)
- ~ Less flexibility through the mid-foot than a Light Cushion
- ~ Firmer heel counter

Stability

- ~ **Indicated for Neutral to mild over-pronation (flat footed during single leg partial squat)**

- ~ Semi-curved last shape
- ~ Firmness of medial midsole or stabilization device
- ~ Some flexibility through the mid-foot
- ~ Firm heel counter

Motion Control

- ~ **Indicated for flat footed individuals**

- ~ Straight last shape
- ~ Firmer medial midsole or stability device
- ~ Will sometimes use higher medial side wedge
- ~ Reinforced and extended heel counter

Data modified from Gazelle Sports, Grand Rapids, Michigan and Agility Physical Therapy and Sport Performance, Portage, Michigan.