

Footwear health check

Ready to buy some new shoes? Carry out these five steps first, to ensure your feet stay healthy and well-protected.

Step 1: Push

Want to see how much support your shoes provide? Push the back ends of your shoes inwards. If the back end stays firm, the heel counter is robust and will provide significant support to your feet. If the back end bends inwards, the heel counter is flexible. This means you either have a light-weight training shoe meant for activities that don't require support, or you may need to re-think your footwear purchase!

Step 2: Bend

Want to check your shoe is flexible where it counts? Bend it where your toes will go.

Your foot naturally bends and flexes at your metatarsal joints, located just behind your toes. Having a shoe that bends with your feet is important not only for comfort, but also for facilitating training routines. The more flexible and elastic your shoe is where the metatarsal joints bend, the greater your ability to activate and act on the muscles in your foot.

Step 3: Twist

Want to make sure your foot is supported during physical activities? Ensure the middle section of your shoe can't twist.

You should not be able to twist your shoes through the middle, instead, it should remain stable and firm. This is essential for supporting your foot arch, and when bearing the weight of your body.

Step 4: Tie

Want to make sure your feet are firmly secured in your shoes? Tying laces can help! If you don't want to use laces, then buckles or velcro can achieve the same result. Securing your feet helps to keep your toes from jamming into the front end of your shoes – and it increases support, which can help relieve pain in your feet.

Step 5: The rule of thumb

Want to ensure your shoes fit correctly? Look no further than your thumb!

You should leave about one thumb-width (1.5cm) of space between the tip of your longest toe and the front end of the shoe you are fitting for. This is because as you move, your foot slides forward. If your toes are touching the front end of your shoes, then they are too small! Remember – your longest toe may not necessarily be your big toe!

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