

Seven Tips to Effective Running Shoe Sizing

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Proper selection of a running shoe involves attention to both style and shoe size. Choosing a shoe based on style and materials has overshadowed the importance of proper sizing. Improperly fitted shoes can lead to issues, such as injured toe nails, Freiberg infarction, blisters, heel slippage, interdigital neuromas, bunions, bunionettes, and nerve compression at the ankle and medial foot. The resultant pain from these issues alters normal gait mechanics and increases susceptibility to further injuries. The following seven tips should be considered as part of the shoe sizing process:

1. The shoe length should be a thumbnail width longer than the longest toe. This is usually the first or second toe.
2. The width and shape of the shoe should match the shape of the foot. Take the foot bed out of the shoe and place it on the ground and stand on the foot bed and see if the width and overall shape match. If the foot drapes over the foot bed, the shoe is too narrow. The metatarsals will be squeezed together which could contribute to bunions and neuromas.
3. Size the shoe later in the day when the foot is a bit larger than first thing in the morning, or size the shoe after exercise.
4. Pay attention to the shape of the heel of the shoe. If a wider forefoot is needed, do not simply get a larger

shoe — that will lead to a wider heel, allowing slippage of the heel and blister formation. The runner may compensate and tie the laces too tight which can cause compression of nerves, tendons, and blood vessels on the anterior ankle. The laces should be loose enough to allow a finger to slide underneath at the ankle.

5. When seeking advice, remember that a shoe that works for one person may not work for another due to differences in foot shape, landing pattern (rear or forefoot), foot intrinsic strength, or stability.
6. Remeasure foot and shoe fit each time a new shoe is purchased. Sizing is not consistent across brands, may not be consistent across models in the same brand, and even can differ with model changes over time.
7. Measure the size of each foot, as some people have one foot slightly larger than the other.

These simple tips will help the runner properly fit the shoe and reduce the risk of irritation, pain, and injury.

The authors declare no conflict of interest and do not have any financial disclosures.

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1537-890X/1811/379

Current Sports Medicine Reports

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