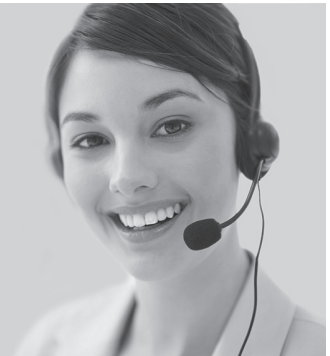


“It was great to talk with you.

Thank you for your interest in ‘How to Buy Shoes for Fitness Walking or Running.’ I hope you find this tip sheet helpful.

Please give me a call if you have more questions about this or other topics.

As your UPMC Health Plan health coach, I’m ready to help in any way I can.”



With good shoes, you are much more likely to enjoy walking or running. You are also more likely to stay on track with your fitness plans. Without good shoes, you may end up with bruised toenails or blisters on your heels. You may have pain or an injury in your feet, shins, knees, or hips.

How to Buy Shoes for Walking

In general, you don’t need to buy special shoes for walking. You can wear casual shoes if they fit you well and support your feet. Also check the following:

- Hold each shoe by the toe and heel. Bend the toe upward. The shoe should bend easily under the ball of the foot.
- Twist the sole from toe to heel. It should offer light to medium resistance to twisting.

If you walk at a fast pace or for long distances, choose running shoes. They:

- Cushion the heel more than walking shoes do
- Are lighter weight and more breathable than walking shoes
- Have features to match the shape of your foot and how your feet strike the ground

Do you walk on pavement? A casual, running, or multisport shoe may be fine. Do you walk on trails or dirt roads? You may want waterproof uppers, as in trail-running shoes.

How to Buy Running Shoes

Follow the tips below.

Before You Shop

1. Choose a few stores that sell athletic footwear and gear. The staff are more likely to be informed there than at other shoe stores. Don’t shop at department stores.

Talk with your doctor before starting or increasing any exercise program. Your doctor may advise you to try certain exercises or avoid others.

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2. Take your old shoes with you. You and the store clerk can look for patterns of wear on the soles of the shoes.
3. Do a “wet test” at home. Wet the bottom of one of your bare feet. Stand normally on a paper bag. After a minute, step off. Use a pencil to draw a line around your footprint. Take the paper with you to the store.
4. Wear the socks you will wear when you exercise.
5. Shop later in the day. Your feet are bigger when you are warmed up.

At the Store

1. Tell the clerk about:
 - Any **problems** you have had with your shoes in the past
 - Any injuries you’ve had to your feet or legs
 - The kinds of exercise you do (For example, most running shoes are fine for walking or running outside or on a treadmill. But they are not made for abrupt motions from side to side, such as in basketball or tennis.)
 - The conditions you exercise in (If you walk or run on dirt roads or trails, you may want waterproof uppers.)
2. Have the clerk measure your feet. Eight out of ten people wear shoes that are too small. Keep in mind that your feet grow as you age. And one foot may be larger than the other.
3. Show the clerk the **wear on the soles of your old shoes** and your “wet test” footprint (see above).

Sole Wear	Wet Test Footprint		Your Feet May	Foot Type	Best Shoe Type May Be
Most on the inside of the forefoot	Mostly filled-in (straight and wide)		Roll inward too much (overpronate)	Low arch (flat feet)	Motion control shoe
Most on outside at the forefoot	Very narrow and curved		Roll inward too little (underpronate)	High arch	Stability shoe
Even across the forefoot	Somewhere between the two above		Strike the ground normally	Normal arch	Neutral cushioned shoe

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4. Try on several brands, styles, and sizes close to your size. Keep in mind that shoe sizes vary. For example, a size 7 may fit you in one brand or style but not in another.
5. Test for fit while standing. Press your thumb down at the end of the shoe. There should be a thumb width of space between the end of the shoe and your longest toe. Do this on both shoes. One foot is often larger than the other. (Did you know that eight out of ten people wear shoes that are too small?)
6. Test for fit while walking. The shoes should be snug everywhere but not tight. They should:
 - Let you wiggle your toes easily
 - Not slip from side to side
 - Be snug but not pinch the widest part of your feet
 - Not pinch your heels or slip at your heels
7. Stomp and scuff your feet. Be sure the shoes are laced snugly. Try to get the tips of your toes to touch the front inside of the shoes. The shoes shouldn't let you. (If you can, do this walking down an incline or hill.)
8. Walk up a few flights of stairs, two stairs at a time. You may need to do this at home. Your heels should not lift off the insoles more than about 1/8 of an inch. If they do, return the shoes and choose another pair. What if they do but the shoes fit in all other ways? Try them while wearing socks with more padding in the heels. Or with an insole that corrects the heel lifting.

Break in New Shoes Slowly

- Your feet, legs, and hips were used to your old shoes. So after you buy new ones, go easy when you walk or run in them and keep distances short. Allow between 60-70 miles to break in the new pair.

Replace Running Shoes Often

- Buy new running shoes every 400 to 500 miles. They may not seem worn out. For example, the uppers and tread may still look good. But even so, they may not be stable or cushioned enough. This can cause injuries.
- Think about buying two pairs of shoes. Switching them every other workout will make each pair last longer.

Keep your active lifestyle safe and free from pain and injuries. Be wise when you buy shoes.



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Take Action

Are you new to buying shoes for fitness walking or running? Use the tips above. Ask your UPMC Health Plan health coach if you have any questions.

Have you bought shoes for walking or running before? Review the tips above. Choose one or two that are not yet a habit for you. Make a plan below for using those tips when you your next pair of shoes. *Be specific.*

Example: "The next time I buy running shoes, I will do a wet test before I go to the store and show it to the clerk. I will also stomp and scuff my feet when I try the shoes on. I will not buy them if my toes touch the front inside of the shoes."



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