

FITNESS & FOOTWEAR

Keeping your feet happy and healthy is essential for anyone embarking on a fitness or athletic journey. Many forms of physical activity involve heavy loads and increased burden on the feet that can lead to general foot pain and risk of injury.

Running applies a force to your body that is three times your body weight each time the foot hits the ground. If your current weight is 80kg, the force on your body with each running stride will be as high as 240kg. In turn, healthy weight loss can be an enormous relief for sore feet. Imagine exercising with a 5kg bag of oranges on your back and the relief on your feet with taking that weight off!

Common running injuries include shin splints, calf pain, Achilles Tendonopathy and plantar fasciitis.

A good sports shoe can help prevent injuries and help you maximise your training.

Tips for a good sports shoe

- Sports shoes should be replaced every 6-12 months. If your shoes are worn they will no longer have the shock absorption capacity and support that your foot needs.
- When buying new shoes the fit should be comfortable straight away. The shoe fit is personal. Choose a shoe that is comfortable for you.
- A new shoe should feel firm but not tight. The upper of the shoe will stretch slightly and the inside of the shoe will compress as you continue to wear the shoe.
- A good training shoe will be light but supportive. In general terms spending a little more for the top of the range model for any brand will be an investment in comfort and longevity.
- Adidas, Asics, Brooks, Mizuno, New Balance, Nike and Saucony all produced good quality training shoes. Many will categorise their shoes as “stability” or “cushioning”, or other similar terminology. If you have a history of foot or ankle injuries a more stable shoe is often a better option.
- Low-heeled, “minimalist” running shoes are often not the best shoe for someone new to running or high impact training. These shoes demand a higher level of muscular control and flexibility and should be used by experienced trainers or for shorter distances.
- Low-heeled, thinner-soled shoes ARE beneficial in heavy-weights training as they maximise the feel of the foot on the ground

and prevent absorption of weight through cushioned soles.

- If your socks are old, replace them. Older sports socks can be abrasive and the seams can be uncomfortable. New sports socks are soft and can make a noticeable difference in foot comfort.

LOOKING AFTER YOUR FEET

Don't let aching feet get in the way of your training. It is normal for feet to feel fatigued and a little sore after a big or high-impact training session.

Give your feet some TLC

- Roll a cold golf ball or frozen bottle of water on the ground under the arch of your foot for relief.
- Indulge in a foot bath
- Convince your partner/ kids/ housemate to give you a foot massage
- Stretch your calf muscles regularly. Tight calf muscles can cause foot injury.

Whilst aches are normal, PAIN is not normal. If your feet are painful you may have a foot injury. See a podiatrist or your GP if you have any concerns.

