

## Footwear

Before you go out and buy a pair of trainers for running, it is important to first find out what type of feet you have. The **shape of your foot** and the **height of your arch** influence which shoe you should choose. Have you flat feet, high arches or low arches? Also, are your feet a neutral pronating foot type, an over pronating foot type or an under pronating foot type?

To find this out many people visit a physio. However there is a free and simple way you can find this out from the comfort of your own home. It is called a wet test.

Before a wet test is demonstrated, let's look at the three different arch and feet types in more detail.

### Types of arches

**Flat feet** – The arch or instep of the foot collapses and comes in contact with the ground. In some individuals, this arch never develops while they are growing.

**Normal arch** – This is the easiest of the three types of feet to take care of as it has a normal range of motion.

**High Arch** - A high arch is the opposite of a flat foot, and somewhat less common. Here the sole of the foot is distinctly hollow when weight is applied to it.

### Foot Types

**Pronation of the foot** refers to how the body distributes weight as it cycles through the gait. (Gait is the way a body moves due to the motion of its limbs.) There are three types of pronation.

**Neutral Pronation** - This "rolling inwards" motion as the foot progresses from heel to toe is the way that the body naturally absorbs shock. Neutral pronation is the most ideal, efficient type of gait.

**Over Pronation** - An overpronator does not absorb shock efficiently. An overpronator's arches will collapse, or the ankles will roll inwards (or a combination of the two) as they cycle through the gait. This causes imbalance.

**Under pronation** - Like an overpronator, an underpronator does not absorb shock efficiently - but for the opposite reason. An underpronator's arches or ankles don't experience much motion as they cycle through the gait. This also causes imbalance. It is also the rarest of the three foot types.

## Wet test

### What you need:

1. A cooking tray
2. Approximately half a pint of water
3. Brown paper (Newspaper or A4 envelope will also work)

### Steps:

1. Place tray on the floor and place brown paper beside it
2. Fill the tray with half pint of water
3. Remove shoe and sock from one of your feet
4. Place barefoot in tray, making sure bottom of foot is fully wet
5. Remove foot from tray and shake to remove drops
6. Place same foot on brown paper, apply pressure and then remove foot (As if walking over piece of paper)
7. Examine brown paper

### Results:

Footprints with a **very straight** shape represent **flat feet** and thus **overpronated** foot types.

Footprints with a **semi-curved** shape are said to represent **medium arches** and thus **neutral** foot types.

Footprints with a very **narrow, curved** shape are said to represent **high arches** and thus **underpronated** foot types.

## Footwear

Once you have determined what kind of feet you have, it is time to decide what kind of trainers to purchase.

If you have **flat feet**, you need shoes that weigh more than normal and have stiffer midsoles to provide the necessary stability to handle the overpronation. The type of shoes a flat footed runner needs are called **motion control running shoes**. Here are three such shoes that are ideal for a flat footed runner.

1. Asics Gel Evolution 5
2. Brooks Addiction 9
3. Brooks Beast

If you have **normal arches** your search for running shoes may not be as difficult as the majority of running shoes available cater for those with normal arches. The types of running shoes a runner with normal arches needs are called **stability running shoes**. Here are three such shoes that are ideal for a normal arched runner.

1. Asics GT-2160
2. Brooks Adrenaline GTS-11
3. Nike Zoom Structure Triax +13

If you have **high arches** you need shoes that do are well cushioned. Cushioned running shoes correct the underpronation that a high arched runner has and it does this in a number of ways. The sole will be more flexible to encourage the little rotation that's already there. The shoe also promotes rotation in the width of the sole. The type of running shoes a runner with high arches needs are called **cushioned running shoes**. Here are three such shoes that are ideal for a high arched runner.

1. Asics Gel Nimbus 12
2. Brooks Glycerin 8
3. Nike Zoom Vomero +5