**Achieve Your New Year’s Resolutions by Choosing the Right Athletic Shoes**

It’s a New Year and time to finally keep that resolution of “losing weight and being healthy.” One way to achieve this goal is by choosing the right athletic shoe. With the many types of athletic shoes that are available, it can be hard to choose the right shoes. There are differences in design and variations in material and weight. The American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons says that these differences have been developed to protect the areas of the feet that encounter the most stress in a particular athletic activity. Some of the different types of sports shoes available include the following:

* **Athletic shoes** are grouped into the following categories: running, training, and walking; they include shoes for hiking, jogging, and exercise walking. These shoes should have a comfortable soft upper, good shock absorption, smooth tread, and a rocker sole design that encourages the natural roll of the foot during the walking motion. Features of a good jogging shoe should include cushioning, flexibility, control, and stability in the heel counter area, lightness, and good traction. A good cross trainer should have flexibility in the forefoot that is needed for running, in addition to stability on the inside and outside of the shoe for the control needed for aerobics and tennis. Walking shoes should flex easily at the ball of the foot, which help feet to push forward.

It’s also important to choose proper-fitting sports shoes. Proper-fitting sports shoes can enhance performance and prevent injuries. Follow these specially designed fitting facts when purchasing a new pair of athletic shoes:

* Try on athletic shoes after a workout or run and at the end of the day. Your feet will be at their largest.
* Wear the same type of sock that you will wear for that sport.
* When the shoe is on your foot, you should be able to freely wiggle all of your toes. There should be a thumb’s width from the tip of the toe to the end of the shoe.
* The shoes should be comfortable as soon as you try them on. There is no break-in period. If they’re not comfortable in the store, they won’t be comfortable when you’re exercising.
* Walk or run a few steps in the shoes. They should be comfortable. The heel of the shoe should not slip off the foot as you walk or run.
* Always re-lace the shoes you are trying on. You should lace through each top eyelet as you crisscross the lacing pattern to ensure a more snug fit and decrease slippage. Don’t tie the laces too tight as this may cause injury to the nerves or tendons on the top of the foot and ankle.

In addition to being overwhelmed by all the choices in athletic shoes, you may be surprised at how much they cost. Slick ads and television commercials tout technological features, the latest gimmicks, and shoes named after sports celebrities. Paying more than $100 does not necessarily get you a better shoe. Good quality shoes may be pricey, but don’t overlook the less expensive shoes because they can outperform their costlier brandmates. Be sure that whatever price you decide to pay for the shoes, it’s because the shoe has the features that meet your needs—not because it is a certain brand or has a sports celebrity’s name on it.

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