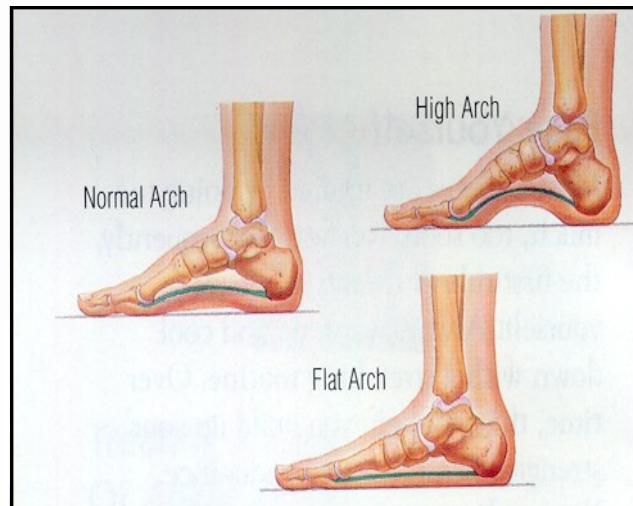




Preparing Your Feet for a Lifetime of Walking

Believe it or not, a 150-pound person walking one mile exerts a force of 63.5 tons on a single foot, according to an American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA) study. That's why making sure your feet are protected with proper fitting sneakers is important before you take a single step. Dr. Lloyd Smith, one of the APMA's top podiatric sports medicine experts, believes that "selecting the correct shoe for your foot type can be paramount in preventing foot-related injuries when starting a walking routine and can also reduce the risk of accelerating and aggravating many foot deformities."

Feet come in many different shapes and sizes, but usually are categorized into three general types:



- **High Arch**
- **Medium Arch**, typical or common foot type
- **Flat Arch**, a low and generally straight foot

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Based on the pictures, decide which type is similar to your foot. Shoe manufacturers have taken foot types into account and created three functional categories for walking and running shoes:

Motion Control

Design: A straight shape shoe that is the most rigid and resistant to twisting and bending of all three styles

Best Fit: Individuals with a low arch, flat and generally straight feet

Stability

Design: A shoe with a slight curve to the shape

Best Fit: Individuals with medium-arched feet, typically deemed "normal"

Neutral

Design: A curved shoe that is the least rigid and resistant to twisting and bending of all three shoe categories

Best Fit: Individuals with high-arched feet



Getting Geared Up

While walking and running shoes are appropriate footwear for walking—walking shoes should never be used for running. With so many ways to exercise, there are athletic shoes to suit almost every activity. How do you know if an athletic shoe or sock is right for walking?

Socks should always wick away moisture—synthetic ones usually work best. Athletic shoes need to provide adequate support and comfort.

Check out APMA's Seal of Acceptance and Approval Program for recommended walking shoes and socks.

Orthotics

An orthotic is a custom designed insert, typically made from a plastic mold of the foot, based upon a podiatrist's prescription. While not all feet require orthotics, the insert is ideal for feet that feel or perform abnormally when standing, walking or running. Orthotics not only provide arch support, but also alter the angle at which the foot strikes a walking or running surface. Orthotics fall into three broad categories: rigid, soft and semi-rigid.

Orthotics fall into three broad categories: **rigid**, **semi-rigid** and **soft**.

Type	Symptoms	Purpose	Form	Footwear
Rigid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strains, aches, and pains in the legs, thighs, and lower back. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Controls motion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plastic or carbon fiber extending along the sole of the heel to balls or toes of the foot. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Walking shoes • Dress shoes
Semi-rigid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Imbalance of the foot while walking or playing sports. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guides the foot to function properly • Allows muscles and tendons to perform efficiently 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Layers of soft material, reinforced with more rigid materials 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Athletic shoes
Soft	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diabetes • Arthritis • Loss of protective fatty tissue on side of the foot 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absorbs shock • Increases balance • Alleviates pressure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft, compressible materials extending from the heel past the ball of the foot to include toes 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wide shoes • Prescribed shoes

Tips on Orthotics

- ⇒ Bring and wear your orthotics with you whenever you purchase a new pair of shoes.
- ⇒ Wear socks or stockings similar to those you plan on wearing when you shop for new shoes.
- ⇒ Return as directed for follow-up evaluations of the functioning of your orthotics.

Walking Surfaces

Before you head out for a stroll, it's important to consider the type of surface and terrain that you'll be walking on. Concrete and asphalt can be hard on your bones and joints, while uneven terrains such as the beach and outdoor trails, although soft, make you more vulnerable to injuries like ankle sprains. Wherever you walk, it's important to have the appropriate shoe gear that provides your foot control and stability.



Surface Type	Evaluation	Helpful Hint
Indoor tracks/ Treadmills	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rubberized tracks and new treadmills are ideal surfaces to walk on • Provide excellent shock absorption and are forgiving on joints and bones 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If walking on a track, be sure to change directions periodically so that you have even pressure on both feet
Outdoor trails	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier on joints and bones than concrete and asphalt • Higher risk of injuries, especially sprained ankles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow your pace so you can navigate the uneven terrain
Beach	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier on joints and bones than concrete and asphalt • Higher risk of injuries, especially sprained ankles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Never run on the beach barefoot
Asphalt	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Easier on joints and bones than concrete but still a very firm surface 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If walking on a road, walk against traffic so drivers can see you and wear bright, reflective clothing
Concrete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hardest surface on your body to walk on, up to 10 times harder than asphalt 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limit the amount of time you walk on concrete • Alternate walks on concrete with those on indoor tracks or treadmills