

2025 Shoe Recommendations + Guide to the Best Shoes for Your Feet

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Foot & Ankle Center of Washington
Seattle, Washington

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www.FootAnkle.com

Running / Exercise Walking – Flexible Forefoot

New Balance:	860	Vongo			
Asics Gel:	Kayano				
Brooks:	Beast* / Ariel*	Addiction	Adrenaline	Ghost	
Altra:	Provision	Torin			
Hoka:	Arahi	Clifton			
Topo:	Phantom				

Running / Exercise Walking—Rigid Rocker Forefoot

Hoka:	Stinson	Bondie	Carbon	
Altra:	Via Olympus			
New Balance:	Fresh Foam More	Kaiha Road		
Brooks:	Caldera			
Asics:	GliderRide			
Saucony:	Iso Ride			

Walking

Rockport:	Pro Walker DMX			
New Balance:	928*	860	993	1540
Brooks:	Addiction Walker (Leather)	(Black shoes)		
Aetrex	all walkers			
Hoka	Bondi LTR (Black and White)			

Trail Run / Walking / Light Hiking

Merrill:	Nova	Moab		
Brooks:	Catamount	Caldera		
Hoka:	Tor Summit	Tor Ultra Hi		
New Balance:	More Trail	Hierro		
Salomon:	XA Pro 3D			

Cross Trainers / Tennis

K-Swiss:	Hypercourt Express Supreme			
Nike:	Superrep			
New Balance:	608	857	X Ct Rally	
Adidas:	Court Team Bounce			

Basketball

Nike Air:	Max Impact	KD		
Adidas:	D Rose			
New Balance:	WXY			
Puma:	Clyde Hardwood			
Under Armour:	Curry HOVR			

Pickleball

Head:	Revolt	Sprint Pro		
Fila:	Volley Zone			
K-Swiss:	Pickleball Supreme			
New Balance:	FuelCell 996			

Sandals - Can Accept Custom Orthotic

Naot Finn Comfort Aetrex Alegria Orthofeet Taos

Sandals - Built-in Arch Support

Vionic Flip-flops / Sandals Sole Spenco oofos hoka recovery

***Extra Stable. For heavy people or flat feet**

Dress Shoes—Women : Flats, Clogs, Casual

Rockport	Aetrex	Ariat	Dansko	Ecco
Vionic	Munro	Taos	Nickels	Aravon
Naot	Dunham	Sudini	Earthies	Theresia

Dress Shoes—Men:

Rockport	SAS-Time Out	Dansko	Taos	Hubbard
Dunham	Timberland	Ecco	Allen Edmonds	
Naot	Cole-Haan	Aetrex	Orthofeet	

Extra Depth

Apex Aetrex Acor Propet Orthofeet Drew Anodyne

A good selection of extra depth shoes available at www.healthyfeetstore.com

Slippers: www.FootAnkle.com/Womens-Slippers.htm

Vionic Haflinger Merrill Slides Spenco

Insoles: To go under orthotic after removing sockliner

Dr. Scholls: Air Pillow Insole Spenco: Flat Insole

Rocker Soles

Use QR code for updated list of casual and dress shoes with rocker soles at:



<https://www.footankle.com/shoe-therapy/rocker-bottom-sole-shoes/>

Socks

Use QR code for updated list of recommended socks at:



www.footankle.com/shoe-therapy/socks/

OTC Arch Supports

Use QR code for updated list of recommended OTC arch supports at:



www.footankle.com/orthotics/off-the-shelf/

Shoes on this list are ones we often recommend to our patients. As many of our patients have foot problems due to excessive pronation, the shoes on this list tend to be more stable than average and accept orthotics easily. Not everyone needs or benefits from the most stable shoes.

This list should be used as a guide only. There are many great shoes that have not made the list due to lack of space. Small independent specialty shoe stores usually offer the best service to help you find the best shoes for your feet.

Also, be aware that there is no “best” shoe. A shoe researcher we respect has a quote that says “different shoes work differently on different people on different surfaces”. The point being, the only way to know what shoe works best for you is to try it.

Finally, there is compelling evidence that alternating between different models of shoes can decrease lower extremity injuries by decreasing repetitive motions that tend to lead to injury.

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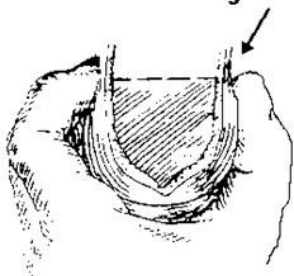
www.FootAnkle.com

How to Evaluate Shoes for Proper Stability

Most people suffering from foot and ankle pain will benefit from shoes that offer greater stability. This is not the case 100% of the time but most of the time having a more stable shoe will reduce many of the damaging forces that occur when the foot flattens or pronates excessively.

The three tests below will help you determine if a shoe has adequate stability to reduce foot pain for most people.

"Rigid" Heel Counter



Rigid Heel Counter

A rigid heel counter will help keep the heel from rolling in excessively. This can be beneficial for many people with foot pain.

To evaluate heel counter rigidity, grab the heel counter with the thumb and forefinger as shown. For best support, you should not be able to compress the heel counter with your fingers.

Torsional Stability

A shoe with torsional stability is one where the forefoot (front) portion of the shoe cannot be easily twisted on the rearfoot (heel) portion of the shoe.

Shoes with more torsional stability will help prevent excessive pronation that can lead to pain associated with conditions such as plantar fasciitis, big toe joint pain and ball-of-foot pain.

To test torsional stability, grasp the heel counter of the shoe with one hand and twist it toward you while at the same time grasping the front of the shoe with the other hand and twisting it away from you.

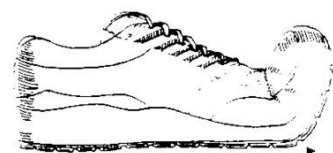
A stable shoe is one where there is minimal motion of the front of the shoe on the rear of the shoe.

Forefoot Flexion at the Toes

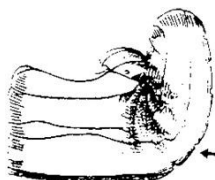
Shoes should bend where your toes bend (see top picture at left), but not all shoes do.

Some shoes are constructed so that their natural bending point is in the middle of the foot (see the bottom picture at left). This unnatural flexion location forces your foot to fight against the shoe.

To test for the natural flexion point, grasp the heel of the shoe with one hand and place the palm of the other hand at the front end of the shoe and push back. The shoe should naturally bend at the toes as shown in the top picture at left.



"Good" Flexion in Forefoot



"Bad" Flexion - Bends at Midfoot

Best Shoes for Heel Pain

There isn't one best type of shoe for people with heel pain as there are a number of causes of heel pain.

Most people with heel pain will benefit, however, from shoes with the following features:

1. Stable heel counter and torsional stability.

Shoes with these features help stop the heel of the foot from rolling in. When the heel rolls in the foot lengthens and tension increases on the plantar fascia. So more stable shoes like this can help reduce tension on the plantar fascia.

2. Extra cushion under the heel. Cushioning helps to slow the velocity of the foot as it strikes the ground and thus will reduce force through the heel.

3. Rocker sole. A rocker sole can help reduce pressure off of the heel by reducing the amount of the time the heel spends on the ground.

Below are shoe brands and models that contain one or more of these criteria and we often find work well for our patients with heel pain:

Hoka: Most models have fair to excellent stability and exceptional cushioning under the heel. Many also have a rocker sole. They're not for everyone (no shoe is) but many people with heel pain find them very comfortable.

Brooks: Many Brooks shoes have excellent torsional stability and a stable heel counter. We often recommend the **Adrenaline** and **Addiction** models to patients with heel pain

Best Shoes for Top of Foot Pain

Top of foot pain is usually due to one of two problems:

1. The foot collapsing leading to compression between the bones on top of the foot
2. Bumps on top of the foot or simply a high instep leading to pressure on the top of the foot from the shoe.

Shoes for top of foot pain should have these features:

1. Torsional stability to help stop collapse of the arch
2. Firm heel to prevent excessive pronation
3. Extra room for the top of the foot

Below are shoe brands and models that contain one or more of these criteria and we often find work well for our patients with top of foot pain:

Aetrex: Aetrex makes many attractive and functional shoes and almost all of them are deeper than average. This extra depth helps reduce pressure on the top of the foot. With everything from running shoes to high heels, Aetrex extra deep shoes can help almost everyone experiencing top of foot pain.

New Balance: Many New Balance are not only very stable but also tend to run a bit deeper than average. This is a great combination for many people with top of foot pain.

*Let us know other conditions for which we should provide specific shoe recommendations.
If you have suggestions email us at doctors@footankle.com*

Best Shoes for Ball of Foot Pain

If you have pain under the ball of the foot look for shoes with the following features:

1. Stable heel counter and torsional stability.

Shoes with these features help stop the heel of the foot from rolling in. When the heel rolls in the first metatarsal bone is forced up and more pressure is transferred to the other metatarsal bones (which are not made to handle that type of pressure).

2. Extra cushion under the ball of the foot.

Cushioning helps to slow the velocity of the foot as it strikes the ground and thus will reduce force through the ball of the foot.

3. Forefoot Rocker sole. A rocker sole can help reduce pressure on the ball of the foot by transferring pressure from the ball of the foot back towards the arch.

Below are a couple sample shoe brands that contain one or more of these criteria and we often find work well for our patients with ball of foot pain:

Hoka: Most models have fair to excellent stability and exceptional cushioning under the ball of the foot. Many also have a rocker sole. They're not for everyone (no shoe is) but many people with heel pain

Samuel Hubbard: These are crazy comfortable shoes with some very unique features to help people with ball of foot pain. This includes a super shock absorbing sole and a Kevlar® shank to provide stability at very light weight. They are also one of the only shoe brands to include Poron® cushion (the most effective cushioning material) in all of their shoes.



Winter Shoe Recommendations

When the weather gets ugly or you are traveling to particularly wet or snowy areas, you may need to make some shoe changes. Below are our recommendations to keep your feet protected in winter.

Wear Modern Waterproof Overshoes Over Your Regular Shoes

One of the problems we are always dealing with in the winter is how to make sure our patients can wear stable shoes with their [orthotics](#) or arch supports during wet and cold weather.

We have a great suggestion that we have been using for years – **Neos Overshoes**. These 100% waterproof overshoes will go over your regular shoes that you wear with your orthotics or arch supports. They are all very affordable running between \$69 – \$99. Some are insulated for colder weather.

Go to [FootAnkle.com](#) and search for “Neos” to see a selection of these overshoes.



Wear Cozy Slippers with Arch Support

We often instruct our patients to always wear a shoe with good arch support in order to help their feet heal and to avoid foot pain. It's not always convenient to wear shoes in the house, however.

A slipper with excellent arch support is often the best choice for wearing in the house. There are not, however, many slippers made that have any arch support, let alone excellent arch support.

The brand of slipper we have found that has the best arch support for most people with foot pain is made by Vionic.

Vionic has slippers in a number of styles but they all have the same exceptional arch support. Here are a few of their styles.



Do Your Feet Get Really Cold?

If your feet get REALLY cold, try these Baffin Cush Insulated Booty Slippers. They are like wearing a polar grade sleeping bag on your feet.



Get a Pair of Waterproof Boots and/or Shoes

Many of the waterproof shoes and boots on the market are very unstable and not good choices for those suffering from foot pain.

While there are a number of stable and waterproof boots available, we recommend Ecco most often.

Ecco waterproof boots and shoes are stable, work well with orthotics and tend to be attractive and fashionable.

Below are some of the many waterproof options available from Ecco.

Ecco - Womens



Ecco - Mens

