

How to Buy Shoes To Prevent Plantar Fasciitis & *Other Foot Pain*

Dr. Rion Berg



Because you downloaded this book, you're on your way to learning one of the most important ways to prevent plantar fasciitis and other foot problems—buying the right shoes for your feet. I'm Dr. Rion Berg and I've been successfully treating plantar fasciitis and other foot conditions for over 40 years. I hope you find the information in this book useful.

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Introduction

Many people who end up in our office don't realize that their shoes may be the primary cause or a significant factor in their foot pain. That's why one of the most important things you can do to prevent plantar fasciitis and other foot pain, is by purchasing the right shoes for your feet.

What Causes Plantar Fasciitis?

Of course, you probably know, [plantar fasciitis](#) doesn't just have one cause. Many factors are involved in its development. Wearing inappropriate or worn-out shoes is just one of those factors. In addition, the following can also add to your plantar fasciitis risk.



- Flat feet or high arches
- Building up your training too rapidly (hiking too many miles before your body is ready for it)
- Tight calf muscles
- Over 40 years old
- Participating in high impact activities like running
- Overweight
- Women are more at risk than men

In this eBook, you'll learn the right steps to take in buying the best shoes for your feet to prevent plantar fasciitis and other foot pain.

Know Your Foot Type

Your foot type will influence the best type shoes for your feet.

Neutral or normal arch - if you have a neutral arch, you'll still need supportive shoes but not to the same degree as someone who has flat feet.

Flat feet - if you have flat feet, your feet will tend to pronate (roll in). You're more likely to develop painful plantar fasciitis, [bunions](#), and hammertoes. While running shoes provide the highest level of stability, there are many other shoes that have the arch support you need.



High arches- if you have high arched feet you'll tend to supinate (foot rolls out or you walk on outside edge of your feet), have tight Achilles tendons and calf muscles. Because high arched feet primarily contact the ground at the ball of the foot and the heel, you're more likely to develop calluses on the ball, side or heel of the foot, hammertoes or clawed toes, and a condition called [metatarsalgia](#). To get the best support for high arches look for:

- A neutral shoe
- With a lot of flexibility
- A firm heel counter
- Ankle support

Go To A Reputable Shoe Store

While many people go online to purchase shoes I don't recommend it, particularly if you struggle with painful feet. Find a shoe store with salespeople that are trained to fit shoes. Some great places in the Seattle area are Sole Perfection Shoes in Shoreline and Everett, The Woolly Mammoth, Super Jock 'N Jill, REI, and Nordstrom. The only exception to the "don't buy online rule" is if you recently had your feet measured and you've had the same brand of shoes before.

Make Sure Your Orthotics Will Fit

If you have plantar fasciitis, bunions, or [hammertoes](#) you may also have orthotics. It's best to bring your orthotics with you to ensure that they'll fit in the shoes you like. Some orthotics may be too large for a particular shoe.

Make Sure to Get Your Feet Measured

Another reason it's important to go to a shoe store rather than buy online, is to get your feet measured. While many people assume that they'll wear the same size shoes their entire adult life, a large number of adults find their feet have become longer and wider as they've aged. This is caused by increased weight, pregnancy, and fallen arches.

In addition to proper measurement you should be able to:

- wiggle your toes in your shoes
- find one finger's width between the tip of your toes and the end of the shoe.



Go Shopping At the End of the Day

Because our feet swell later on in the day, it's a good idea to shop in the afternoon or evening so you don't end up with shoes that are too small.

Replace Your Inserts

If you have mild plantar fasciitis or are prone to it, I recommend replacing your existing shoe inserts. Why? Because most shoe inserts aren't very supportive. Try either [Powersteps](#) or [Rediorthotics](#) for extra support.

Buy Supportive Shoes

People at risk for plantar fasciitis should wear the most supportive shoes possible. Shoes should bend at the toe not in the center, be difficult to twist when you try to wring them out like a rag and have a stiff heel counter that you can't move easily. Check out our video "[How To Test Any Shoe for Stability](#)".

Shoes to Avoid

While I'm going to devote the rest of this eBook to shoes I recommend, here are some shoes to avoid.

Tight Shoes, Short Shoes, and Narrow Toed Shoes

Not only do shoes like this hurt, they can also cause ingrown toenails, fungal toenails, and a condition called [Morton's neuroma](#).

Flat Shoes

While ballet flats are all the rage, they're the wrong choice for someone who is prone to plantar fasciitis. Instead of a flat shoe with no arch or support, a person with a tendency toward plantar fasciitis needs the opposite. Look for a shoe with a slight heel (one inch or less) and good arch support.

Flip Flops

While it's fine to wear flip flops at the beach or the pool, don't wear them for long walks or other activities. They're usually totally flat and have no support. Wearing them for extended periods of time can lead to heel pain, Morton's neuroma, blisters, and [sprained ankles](#).

Flexible Shoes

Flexible shoes, or what I call squooshy and cushy shoes, may feel really comfortable but they provide little or no support. It's important to balance comfort with support. Remember you can test any shoe by using the guidelines in my video above. If you find shoes that can easily bend in half and be wrung out like a rag avoid them if you don't want a plantar fasciitis flare-up.

High Heels and Stilettos

You know high heels are bad, but you might wonder why. First, high heels can shorten your calf muscles putting you at greater risk for plantar fasciitis. And second, high heels place a lot of force on the balls of your feet and toes leading to and worsening conditions like Morton's neuroma, bunions, and hammertoes.

Shoe Recommendations for Plantar Fasciitis and Other Foot Conditions

Many people worry that painful feet will spell the end of nice-looking shoes. Before you have visions of grandma in her orthopedics, I want to assure you that in the past 20 years shoe companies have gone out of their way to create shoes that are not only comfortable but stylish.

While you may not be able to keep up with the Kardashians when it comes to footwear, there will still be a wide selection of shoes you'll be happy wearing.

The suggestions below are a combination of my personal favorites and the recommendations of Jason Brown of Sole Perfection Shoes in Shoreline. If you want to watch videos we've done together over the past few years you can [view them here](#). In addition, you can peruse the [Barking Dog Shoes](#) website. The owner lists best shoes by foot condition and shoe type.



Jason Brown & Dr. Berg

Athletic Shoes

Athletic shoes need to be supportive on top as well as at the base. While woven fabrics on top of the shoe make them lighter weight, make sure they hold your feet in securely.

It's also important to get the right type of stability for your particular sport and foot type. For example, basketball shoes will be more supportive around the ankle to prevent sprains when twisting and turning, Soccer shoes will fit more tightly to ensure optimal feel and are cut low around the ankle so players can stay agile. Cleats provide traction.

Most athletic shoe brands will have styles with varying degrees of stability and provide support for either the pronating or supinating foot. You can usually tell if you roll in or out based on your symptoms. If you have arch or heel pain you're more likely to roll your feet in. If you have pain on the outside of your ankle you mostly likely roll your feet out.

Best Athletic Shoes for People with Flat Feet

For walkers and runners with flexible flat feet or low arches who over pronate I recommend these shoes:

Brooks Addiction Walking Shoe ([women](#) and [men](#))



[New Balance Women's Walking Shoe](#).



Brooks Ariel Running Shoe ([women](#))

Brooks Beast Running Shoe ([men](#))



Hoka One One Running Shoes ([women](#)) ([men](#))



Supportive Shoes and Boots for Women

All of these shoes have great arch support and work well for people with plantar fasciitis. See below to see which ones are particularly good for other foot conditions.

Naot Matai Maryjane-great comfort shoe



Munro Traveler- stretch top is great for people with bunions and hammertoes



Alegria Mary Jane – good for people with hallux rigidus and other forefoot problems.



Karina Monk Strap by Aetrex- great comfort shoe



Aetrex Emery Arch Support Sneaker - good for everyday wear.



Francesca Black Milled Nappa Boots- provides great support and is scotchgarded and highly water resistant. It has great foot beds.



Taos Ringer Leather Boot- side zippers make this boot easy to get in and out of. They have great arch support.



Dansko Women's Faithe Inside Zip Ankle Bootie -great foot bed.



Alegria Charlette Women's Boot – double zipper for easy access



Dansko Women's Paisley Waterproof Outdoor Sneaker- great for dog walking. Great insole support and tread for winter. Cushioned foot bed that's also replaceable



Supportive Sandals for Women

Sandals should provide a similar level of support as a closed toed shoe. Choose sandals with adjustable foot straps to accommodate your feet when they swell. Look for sandals with a removable foot bed if you have orthotics.

Everyday Sandals

Zanzibar Backstrap Sandal by Revere - great arch support with a removable foot bed. It also offers extension straps for people who have issues with swollen feet.



Aetrex Jillian Sandals for Plantar Fasciitis - great arch supports with a cushioned foot bed. Memory foam over cork. Contains a met bar for relief of ball of foot pressure. Also great for someone with high arches.



Taos Women's Universe Sandal –great for people with high arches and for those with sensitivity on the top of their foot. Has arch and metatarsal support and fully adjustable.



Naot Enid -removable cork footbed



Halsa - very light weight with great arch support and very adjustable.



Sports Sandals

Hoka Water Sandal



Dansko Racquel Sport's Sandal- waterproof, lot's of cushion, good stability and supportive, and adjustable.



House Shoes for Women to Prevent Plantar Fasciitis

People with plantar fasciitis or are prone to it should not go barefoot at home. Going barefoot can cause the foot to flatten out causing stress on the plantar fascia. Here are some great choices for supportive house shoes.

Dansko Women's Kane Cushion Comfort Clogs - made with recycled sugarcane; cushioned insole with arch support





Kane Dogs EVA Clog - A gardening clog/house shoe from Dansko made of recycled sugar cane.

Taos Clog – has a removable foot bed.



Supportive Shoes for Men

Outdoor and Hiking Shoes

Merrill Men's Jungle Moc Waterproof Slip On – this shoe is similar to the Gust and it's also waterproof.



Merrill Men's Moab 2 WTPF Hiking Shoe



House Shoes

Merrill Men's Gust Slip On- this shoe is great for wearing in the house but also wearing in the garage or outside.



Merrill Men's Encore Gust 2 Moccasin – perfect house shoe.



If you're struggling with plantar fasciitis or another foot problem, don't wait to come in. We can find you an appointment in 2 weeks or less.

Call our office at 206-368-7000 or [request an appointment online](#) or scan QR code below.



Other Books for People With Plantar Fasciitis



Videos for People With Plantar Fasciitis

