

[COACH CULPEPPER] DIFFERENT SHOES FOR DIFFERENT RUNNERS

BY ALAN CULPEPPER

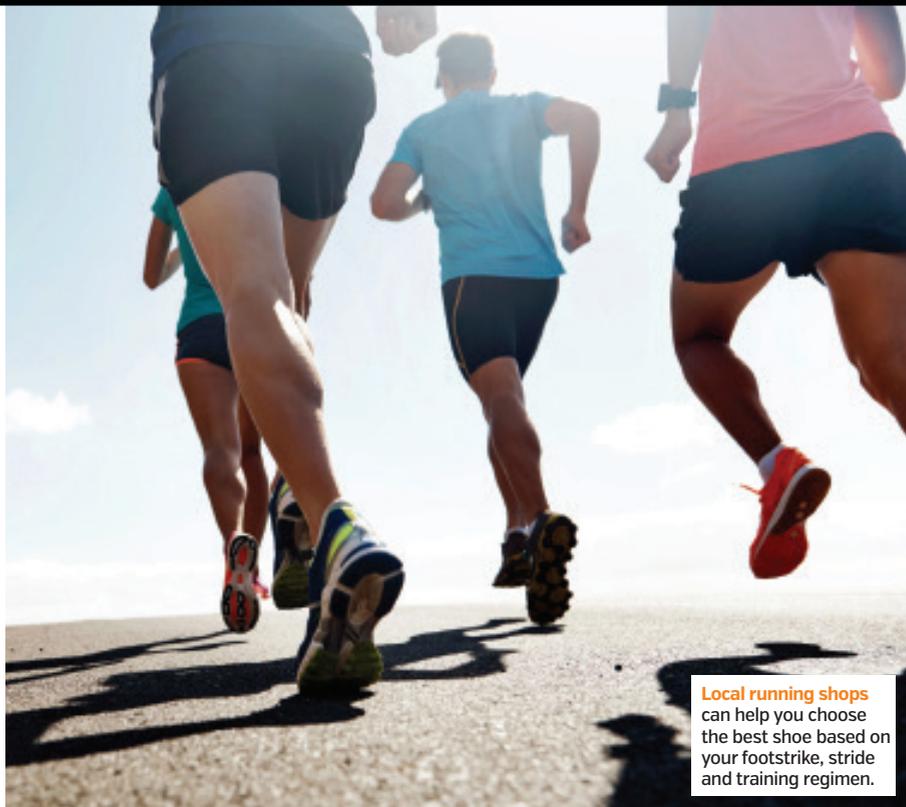
THERE HAS BEEN so much evolution and discussion related to footwear the past few years that it's appropriate to unpack how it all relates to training. From overbuilt stability shoes, to minimalist models, to the rise of ultra cushion shoes, runners have more options than ever. And advancements in footwear are a great thing: They've made runners less susceptible to injury, improved performance and given them more overall enjoyment while running. The key is not being pulled too far to the fringes or adapting a fad mentality when it comes to your choice of footwear. Educating yourself about shoes, being honest with yourself as an athlete and staying in touch with your individual goals are critical. Below are a few guidelines that will help you identify the type of runner you are and what types of shoes are appropriate for you. In addition to the suggestions below, it is also essential that you are fit properly for running shoes.

SHOE CATEGORIES

Daily Trainers: These include the various types of shoes in the minimal, moderate and maximum support categories.

Lightweight Trainers: These are lighter-weight shoes that have good cushioning but are several ounces lighter than a daily trainer. They feel like less shoe on your foot and are noticeably lighter without compromising impact protection.

Racing Flats: These are featherweight shoes that are much lower to the ground than daily or lightweight trainers and fit very snugly. Not necessarily a "minimalist" shoe, flats still have a layer of cushioning underfoot and are designed for fast, efficient running.



Local running shops can help you choose the best shoe based on your footstrike, stride and training regimen.

WHAT TYPE OF RUNNER ARE YOU?

New Runner: If you are a running newbie, training more consistently or participating in a race or two per year, one pair of daily trainers is sufficient. Fit is very important, as is the level of support and cushion for your specific needs, which can be analyzed at a local running store. The bottom line is that your shoes should be comfortable and not impede your gait. You can wear your daily trainers for various types of runs: long, short, easy or fast.

Enthusiast: If you run multiple races each year, meet with a training group and have targeted time goals, then you should own multiple pairs of shoes to fit your training routine. Rotate through one or two pairs of daily trainers and a pair of lightweight trainers. This will allow your shoes to recover, helping them last longer and feel better every day. The daily trainer serves as your primary shoe for all your easy and long runs. The lightweight trainers should be used for your harder workouts—two to three times a week. Lightweights work really well for tempo runs, fartlek

workouts or even interval sessions on the track. They should also be your first choice come race day, as they promote a much more efficient foot strike based on shoe geometry, as well as make workouts—and races—more effective.

High Level: If you have graduated to pushing yourself to your highest potential, have raced for years and are always looking to set a personal best or battle it out for age-group honors, consider three varieties of shoes: your daily trainers (preferably two pairs to rotate), a pair of lightweight trainers and a pair of racing flats. As mentioned, lightweight trainers are great for quicker workouts, such as tempo runs or intervals at 10K to marathon pace. For workouts faster than 10K pace and shorter in duration, racing flats should be considered. These should not be worn excessively, as they are not built to last very long and can compromise your impact protection.



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