



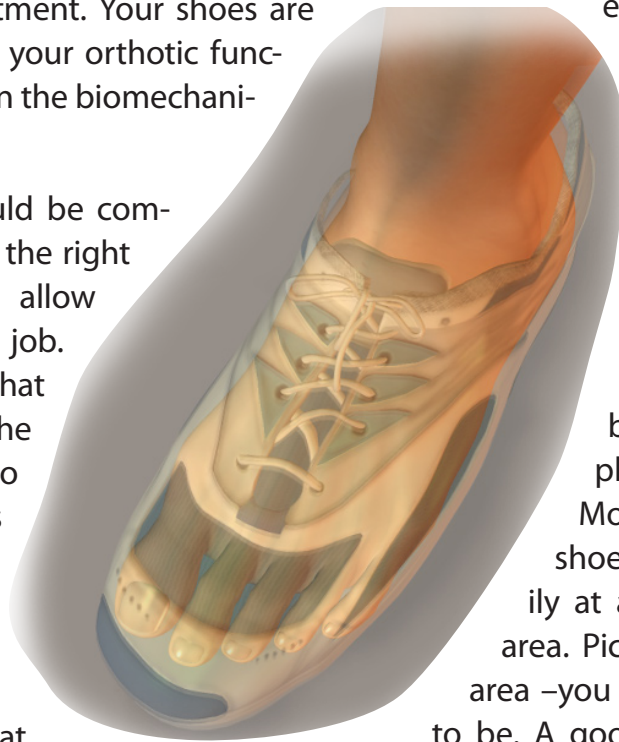
## CHOOSING THE BEST ATHLETIC SHOE

Now that you have your Sole Supports™ orthotics, you need help choosing the right shoe to go with them. Choosing the right shoe is a very important part of your treatment. Your shoes are the platform upon which your orthotic functions and play a vital role in the biomechanical function of your feet.

Ideally a good shoe should be comfortable, durable, provide the right amount of support and allow your orthotics to do their job. So how do you know what shoe works for you? The most important thing to know is that shoe fit is more important than any brand. Most major shoe companies make shoes for different types of feet, and you have to know what type of foot you have before you choose a shoe. The challenge is to match the features of the shoe with the anatomical features of your feet. There are two main types of feet: 1) rigid high arched feet and 2) flexible flat feet. Many of you will fall somewhere in between these two types.

Severe to moderate over-pronators or people with flat, flexible feet should look for a shoe with good **motion control** design in the heel counter and midsole. The high arched foot or over-supinator should look for a shoe with **extra cushion-**

**ing** in the heel and forefoot. The majority of us are between these extremes: look for a shoe with the right combination of **stability** (for control of excessive foot flexibility) and cushioning (to accommodate excessive foot rigidity). For those prone to bunions, blisters and calluses (which your orthotics will help you with) look for a shoe with a roomy toe box.



Another critical factor for correct shoe fit is: does the shoe bend in the forefoot in the same place as the base of your big toe? Most shoes, especially athletic type shoes, are designed to flex most easily at a certain place in the forefoot area. Pick up a shoe and flex it in this area –you will see where the bend wants to be. A good shoe salesperson will know how to determine if the shoe is bending close enough to where your big toe bends. Why is this important? If the shoe wants to bend differently





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than your foot, you will be fighting it with each step. You do not want a loser in that fight! So it is much better to have the shoes and feet working in harmony.

You should have your feet evaluated by a trained professional prior to having your shoes fit. Also, you have a better chance of finding the right shoe if you shop at a specialty store with knowledgeable salespeople rather than a department store. Remember, a good shoe is a significant part of the battle!

When you shop for new shoes, make sure you have your orthotics with you. This is crucial to determining a good fit because, in many cases, the orthotics will be raising your arches and that will literally change the shape of your foot! You will be looking for shoes with removable inserts that easily come out in order to accommodate your orthotics. In most cases, the covers of your Sole Supports™ orthotics are designed to replace this insert. Consult with your Sole Supports™ provider if this applies to you.

There are some additional things to remember when you are at the store. Bring the socks that you wear during your athletic activities with you. You will notice a different fit with different socks due to variations in sock thickness. Try shopping at the end of the day, or after you have exercised. Your feet swell at the end of the day and after activity, so this will ensure a proper fit (it is better to have them a little loose than too tight). Make sure the salesperson measures both of your feet with you standing on them. Many people will have size differences in their feet from left to



**Motion Control Shoes:**  
Heel area is thicker and stiffer



**Stability/Cushion Shoes:**  
Midsole control and shock absorption



**Flex Point in Shoe for the Big Toe**

right. It is best to try on both shoes, lace them up completely and walk around the store for a few minutes. Most specialty running stores will let you leave the store and do some light jogging to try them out. Do not count on a break in period, your shoes should feel comfortable right away.

To summarize, first know your foot type and flexibility. Have your feet evaluated and sized properly by a trained professional before you buy your shoes, and bring your orthotics with you when you buy your new shoes. Again, try to buy from a *knowledgeable* sales person.

Your shoes are the one piece of equipment your orthotics can't work without. Your certified Sole Supports™ provider can give you shoe recommendations based on your foot type that may help you in your decision.