

WHEN TO REPLACE

Running in old or worn-out shoes can lead to discomfort and injuries. Over time, your running shoes lose shock absorption, cushioning, and stability. When you run in worn-out shoes, it increases the stress and impact on your legs and joints, which can cause overuse injuries as well as just general aches and pains.

How Long Do Running Shoes Last?

A good rule of thumb is to replace your running shoes every 300–600 km, depending on your running style, body weight, and the surface on which you run. Lighter runners can get new shoes at the upper end of the recommendation while heavier runners should consider replacement shoes closer to 300 km.

Signs You Should Replace Your Shoes

Here are some indicators that it is probably time for a new pair of running shoes.

A. High Mileage on Your Shoes

In addition to tracking the number of kilometers you have on your shoes, where you run is also an important consideration. If you run on rough roads or trails, you'll need to replace your shoes sooner than if you do primarily treadmill running. If you have trouble tracking when you bought your shoes and how many kilometers they have on them, write the date on the inside of your shoe when you buy them. By knowing the exact date you bought them, you should be able to roughly estimate how many kilometers you've run in them.

B. Pain When Running

If you've been feeling muscle fatigue, shin splints, or some pain in your joints — especially your knees — you may be wearing shoes that have lost their cushioning. When you're feeling pain on both sides — both knees, for example — that's often an indication that you need new running shoes.

C. Poor Shock Absorption

If you feel like you can feel the impact of every step in your feet, knees, and hips, it means that the shock absorption in your shoes has deteriorated. Running is a high-impact sport, but shoes with good shock absorption can minimize the strain on your ligaments, tendons, muscles, and bones.

D. Worn-Out Treads

One tell-tale sign that you need new running shoes is if the treads, especially on the soles, are worn-out. The soles last longer than the shoe's cushioning and shock absorbency, so if the soles are worn down, it's definitely time for new ones. You

should never run in shoes that have worn-down soles. Save them for working in the garden or mowing the lawn.

E. Uneven Wear

You should also watch for signs that your shoes are wearing unevenly. If your tread wear pattern indicates a possible gait issue, talk to someone at the den for advice on what you need to do to correct the problem. Changes to your running form can help, but you also likely need to change shoes as well.

Excessive wear on the front part of your shoe can be a sign of overpronation, which means your foot is turning too far inward as you take each step.

If you spot excessive wear on the outside edges of your shoe, it is a sign of underpronation (supination). This means that your foot shifts outward with each step, placing the brunt of the impact on the outer bones of your foot.

Newer Shoes Just Feel Better

Your overall comfort when running is important. Research suggests that wearing comfortable shoes helps runners maintain proper form and movement when running, which in turn helps minimize injury risk. If newer shoes just feel better than your old pair, consider switching.

Some experts recommend that runners rotate two pairs of running shoes. If you get a new pair of running shoes about half-way through the life of your old ones, they can serve as a reference to help you notice when your old ones are ready to be replaced. If you notice a big difference in the cushioning of the newer pair, then it's probably time to retire the old ones. Also with 2 pairs on the go and rotating you will get the life of 3 pairs!!

Try the Twist Test

If you hold your running shoes at both ends and twist the shoe, it should feel firm. An old shoe or one that doesn't have proper support will twist easily.

This test, however, does not apply to all running shoes. Most light-weight, cushion running shoes will fail this test right out of the box. For sturdy supportive sneakers that have a lot of miles on them, this is a good indicator that it time for a replacement.

How to Extend the Life of Your Shoes

Knowing how often to replace your running shoes is important, but there are also steps that you can take to extend the life of your shoes.

Here are a few things you can do to get more wear out of your shoes:

1. **Only wear running shoes when you run.** It might be tempting to wear your shoes all day — after all, they are comfortable and lightweight. But that extra daily wear can limit

the life of your shoes dramatically. Kick them off after your workout and switch out to a pair of older “retired” running shoes.

2. **Take them off (and put them on) the right way.** Always undo the laces when you put your shoes on and avoid just toeing them off when you finish your run. Not lacing and unlacing can break down the heel of your shoe, which means your shoes can end up getting overstretched.
3. **Keep them clean.** Give your shoes a quick wipe down after every run to remove any dirt, mud, or water. Remove any rocks or pebbles that might have gotten caught in the treads. If you need to wash them, do not toss them in the washing machine. Using just a sponge and some soapy water, hand wash your shoes then allow them to air dry.
4. **Always air dry your shoes.** Never toss them in the dryer, set them on the heat vent, or place them on a shoe dryer. The high heat can break down the material and soles of your shoes.
5. **Rotate your shoes.** Rather than just using the same pair day in day out, consider buying at least two sets of shoes so that you can make sure that your shoes have time to fully air dry between runs. You can also vary your shoes depending on the type of running you plan to do (trails vs roads vs tracks) as well as based on the weather conditions.

Even if you take great care of your shoes, you will want to replace them about every 600 km. Keep an eye on the overall condition of your shoe as well as how you feel after running. Let all of these indicators act as a guide to help you determine how long your running shoes last.