



Determining your foot arch

Are you thinking of getting a new pair of athletic shoes? Be sure to check your arch type (high arch, neutral arch, low arch). Not sure about your foot type? Dip your foot in water and then step on a piece of cardboard and examine the print that remains.

MAYO CLINIC HEALTH SYSTEM
mayoclinichealthsystem.org

©2018 Mayo Foundation for Medical Education and Research. All rights reserved. MAYO, MAYO CLINIC, Mayo Clinic Health System and the triple-shield Mayo logo are trademarks and service marks of MFMER.



Normal Arch (Medium)

If the middle part of your arch is about half filled, this means you have a normal arch. Your arch naturally supports your bodyweight and pronates (rolls in) under a normal load. Look for shoes with firm midsoles, straight to semi-curved lasts — last refers to the shape of the sole and the footprint around which the shoe is built — and moderate rear-foot stability.



Flat Arch (Low)

If your footprint looks like a complete foot, then you have a flat arch. Your foot probably rolls in (pronates) when you walk or run. Your low arches may contribute to muscle stress and joint problems and you may benefit from a walking shoe with a straight last and motion control to help stabilize your feet.



High Arch

If you see very little of your footprint, you likely have high arches. High arches may contribute to excessive strain on joints and muscles, as your feet may not absorb shock as well, especially if you perform a lot of impact or jumping activities. Look for cushioning to compensate for your lack of natural shock absorption. A curved last also may help in some cases.

Most important of all, however, is comfort. Multiple studies have shown that there is no one "best shoe" for a particular foot type, and comfort and proper fit should be the main criteria you use when selecting new athletic shoes.