

Why Would Someone Run Barefoot?

One of the fastest growing trends within the running community is one that many people find odd and dangerous. This new fad is called "barefoot running" in which people do not wear shoes at all during a run or wear a new type of shoe called "barefoot running shoes". Barefoot running shoes definitely sounds like an oxymoron, however, these shoes are a shoe that includes the philosophy of barefoot running without the added danger of cutting your feet on a rock, piece of glass, etc.

Barefoot running started to grab headlines because of Olympic athletes and marathon runners winning medals and breaking world records without shoes on. Many people say that this is a great way to run because our feet were developed before the advent of shoes and sneakers. On the contrary our feet were also here before the beginning of paved roads, which exerts extra stress on a runner's feet.

Bare feet are not meant to endure the stress of running on concrete and asphalt. Many people who support this type of running do so because they feel that their feet have more room to move around, not confined into the shape of a shoe. They also state that they have increased blood flow to their feet, less ankle sprains, less ingrown nails, etc. These problems are often the result of improper shoe gear. Many people have shoes that do not provide nearly enough arch support, which results in injury. Ingrown nails and decreased blood flow are often attributed to wearing shoes that are too tight. To prevent these types of injuries it is important to wear a shoe that is fitted to your specific foot. Many specialized shoe stores and podiatrists can recommend a sneaker that is custom fitted to your specific foot type. Running barefoot can also be very dangerous. There is a great increase in injuries from stepping on glass, rocks, and other materials that can cut or get stuck in the foot.

Another reason many people are running barefoot is because they say that it corrects the way they run and walk. The proper way to run is to land on the middle of the foot and propel yourself forward. Many people land on the heel which can lead to problems further down the road for your hips, knees, ankles, and feet. Barefoot running is said to correct this because "it is too painful to run improperly barefoot". A much easier and painless way to correct the way you walk and run is with a shoe insert called an orthotic. Orthotics can be matched to your foot type as closely as possible and dispensed over the counter. They can also be custom molded to your feet to give your exact foot type the maximum amount of support and correction possible. Orthotics are a great way to fix your running and walking pattern without having to endure the pain of barefoot running.

There is a lot of debate and hype regarding this new fad. It's important to weigh the positive and negative results. The majority of the negative connotations that come with wearing running sneakers are due to shoes that don't give enough support or shoes that are worn improperly. Specialized shoe stores and podiatrists are able to help you find a shoe that will eliminate these problems and give you the support and comfort that is so important for a good healthy run.