

## Week 3: Run Your Race

### Story

**“You ran well. Who hindered you from obeying the truth?”**

**—Galatians 5:7 (NKJV)**

On November 20, 2009 Gary Brasher attempted to accomplish something that most of us would never even consider, much less aspire to, when he completes a triple-iron triathlon. That’s a full iron-distance triathlon every day for three consecutive days! He will swim, bike, and run his way over 422.6 miles in a 72-hour span! It is truly one of the most difficult sporting endeavors ever imagined.

I can still remember my first triathlon. It was many years ago now, and it wasn’t anywhere near the iron distance. In fact, it was a “sprint” triathlon: .5-mile swim, 16-mile bike and 5K run. And as you can imagine, the name “sprint” indicates that you should basically be able to “go all-out” in a race of that distance. But for me, my first race was a debacle.



My goal was simply to finish. I had modestly trained for a few weeks and was pretty confident that I would be able to do it, but since it was all new to me, I really didn’t know for sure. As I prepared for the race, I remember asking a number of friends that were experienced in the sport for advice. They were all a tremendous help, but alongside their training tips and technical advice came one important message from a friend who said, “Just run your race.” In essence, “Don’t worry about what everyone else is doing. Don’t get sucked in to the pace of the rest of the racers. Simply run *your* race.”

I was impressed with the simplicity of the advice, especially since many of these friends had completed in iron-distance events. They knew that I would be tempted to give in to the competitive spirit even though I was not physically prepared to go all-out. They also knew that my adrenaline would be high and that my mental approach to the event would have to control my emotional response to the electric race environment.

As the swim began, I foolishly threw their advice out the window and decided to try to stay stroke for stroke with the strongest swimmers. As a former competitive swimmer, I suddenly believed that I was sixteen again and could go out in front and avoid the congestion of all the bodies in the water. Needless to say, that was not the race strategy I'd planned! And the fact that the water was only sixty degrees gave me an instant shock experience that left me gasping for air—something that I wouldn't really recover from until I dragged myself from the water.

It didn't take long for me to have my first "near-drowning" experience as I completely ran out of gas. I nearly had to quit the race because I chose not to run *my* race. I got caught up in the excitement of the event and decided to abandon my plan and do what the other competitors were doing.

In Galatians 5:7, Paul asks the Galatians why they stopped running their race. Jesus had given them a specific race to run—one of freedom, grace, and love. Unfortunately, they got sucked back into following the requirements of the Law; they were burdened again by trying to earn God's favor. They'd lost the joy and peace that they'd received through the simple belief and trust in Jesus. Basically, they'd stopped running their race.

For me, it's so tempting to return to my old ways of trying to earn God's favor—to be performance-driven, to be "good enough," to follow the rules, to think that God is only pleased with me when I'm achieving or doing things just right. But this is a burden of slavery. And it's a lie. We are saved by grace, and we are changed by His Spirit. It's not something we do; it's something He alone can do in us.

So, don't get derailed by what someone else is doing. Don't let the emotion of the moment get you off course. Don't let your old ways of doing things make you abandon the new. Run *your* race. Stick to His plan and let God keep you on the path that leads to life.

*Story by Jimmy Page, Fit4Ever, Sharing the Victory, FCA*

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**Discussion**

Do you ever find yourself looking for worldly answers rather than turning to the Bible?

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Why do we seem to get on a “spiritual roll” sometimes and then fall flat at other times?

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How can you better run “God’s Race” rather than the world’s?

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**Get in the Word**

Workout 1—Acts 20:19–24

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Workout 2—Galatians 5:7

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Workout 3—Philippians 3:12–14

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## Shoes



### How to Choose Running Shoes

There are lots of running-shoe brands and styles on the market. While most running shoes feel comfortable when you're standing on the carpet in a sports store, the true test is after several miles on the trail or asphalt. You'll quickly realize that your perfect shoe has more to do with the shape of your foot and your running style than it does with the logo stitched on the side.

### Road Runners or Trail Runners?

**Road running shoes** are designed for pavement and occasional forays onto packed surfaces with slight irregularities (fire roads, nature trails, wood-chip paths). Light and flexible, they're made to cushion or stabilize feet during repetitive strides on hard, even surfaces.

**Trail running shoes** are essentially beefed-up running shoes designed for off-road routes. They are enhanced with aggressive outsoles for solid traction and fortified to offer stability, support, and underfoot protection. If you routinely encounter roots, rocks, mud, critter holes, or other obstacles during runs, choose trail runners.

**Tip:** If you can't find a trail shoe with the right fit for your running mechanics, it's better to go with a road-running shoe.

## **Know Your Feet**

**Foot size:** You probably know your shoe size already. But if you're unsure or if one foot is larger than the other, it's best to have your feet measured at REI or other shoe retailer with a Brannock device. (That's the flat metal tool with sliders that measure the length, width, and the toe-to-ball length of the foot.) Whenever possible, try the shoe on to see if it fits. Shoe lasts (which determines shoe sizes, described below) vary by manufacturer and even from one shoe model to another. You may need a half size or even a full size smaller or larger than you think.

Most men wear a D-width shoe while most women wear a B-width. You don't have to wear a gender-specific shoe—the lasts are basically the same. Men: Try a women's shoe if you have a narrow foot. Women: Try a men's shoe if you have a larger or wider foot. If the shoe fits, wear it!

**Arch shape:** Here's a simple way to find yours. As you get out of the tub, shower, or pool, take a look at the footprint you leave on the bathmat or cement. The shape of your footprint will indicate the type of arch you have. Your arch shape affects the way your foot moves as you run.



## **Biomechanics of Running**

Your foot shape is closely related to its movement as you walk or run. The typical scenario: With every stride, your heel strikes the ground first. It rolls slightly inward and the arch flattens to cushion the impact. Your foot then rolls slightly to the outside and stiffens to create a springboard to propel your next step.

As runners, however, we each experience different levels of these sideways motions as we stride. The key characteristics:

**Pronation** is the foot's natural inward roll following a heel strike. Basic (neutral) pronation helps absorb impact, relieving pressure on knees and joints. It is a normal trait of neutral, biomechanically efficient runners.

**Over-pronation** is an exaggerated form of the foot's natural inward roll. It is a common trait that affects the majority of runners, leaving them at risk of knee pain and injury. Over-pronators need stability or motion control shoes.

**Supination** (also called under-pronation) is an outward rolling of the foot resulting in insufficient impact reduction at landing. Relatively few runners supinate, but those who do need shoes with plenty of cushioning and flexibility.

The illustration below shows these mechanics on a runner's left leg:

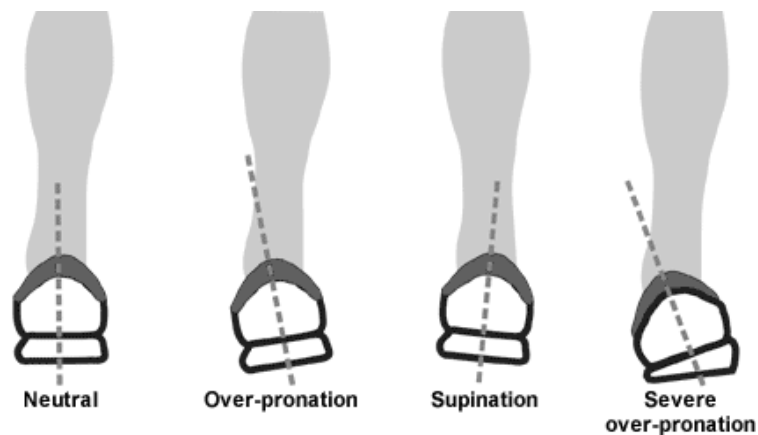
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How can you be sure which running style is yours? A podiatrist or physical therapist could undoubtedly tell you, but a simpler answer is probably in your closet. If you own a well-used pair of running shoes, check the wear pattern on the soles.

- If you have a neutral stride, shoe wear is centralized to the ball of the foot and a small portion of the heel.
- Over-pronation is identified by wear patterns along the inside edge of your shoe.
- Supination is marked by wear along the outer edge of your shoe.

## Types of Running Shoes

**Cushioning shoes** provide elevated shock absorption and minimal medial (arch side) support. They're best for runners who are mild pronators or supinators. Cushioning shoes are also good for neutral runners during off-pavement runs. Reason: Minor irregularities in surfaces such as dirt roads give feet a little variety from the repetitive, same-spot strikes they typically experience on hard surfaces.

**Stability shoes** help decelerate basic pronation. They're good for neutral runners or those who exhibit mild to moderate over-pronation. They often include a "post" (see Shoe Construction 101, below) in the midsole. Due to their extra support features, virtually all trail-running shoes fall in the stability category.

**Motion control shoes** offer features such as stiffer heels or a design built on straighter lasts to counter over-pronation. They're best for runners who exhibit moderate to severe over-pronation.

Here are some general guidelines:

	<b>Pronators</b>	<b>Over-pronators</b>	<b>Supinators</b>
<b>Foot mechanics</b>	Normal inward roll	Excessive inward roll	Excessive outward roll
<b>Foot shape</b>	Low arch	Flat foot to low arch	Medium to high arch
<b>Shock absorption in stride</b>	Good	Good	Poor
<b>Recommended shoe last</b>	Semi-curved	Straight	Curved
<b>Recommended type of shoe</b>	Stability	Motion Control	Cushioning

## Shoe Construction 101

### Uppers

This refers to the upper part of the shoe above the sole.

- **Synthetic leather** is a supple, durable, abrasion-resistant material derived principally from nylon and polyester. It's lighter, quicker drying, and more breathable than real leather. Plus, it requires no (or very little) break-in time and therefore reduces the chance of blisters.
- **Nylon and nylon mesh** are durable synthetic materials most commonly used to reduce weight and boost breathability.
- **TPU (thermoplastic urethane) overlays** are positioned over the breathable shoe panels (such in the arch and the heel). These small, abrasion-resisting additions help enhance stability and durability.
- **Waterproof/breathable uppers** (e.g., Gore-Tex XCR or eVent) use a membrane bonded to the interior of the linings. This membrane blocks moisture from entering while still allowing feet to breathe. Shoes made with these membranes keep feet dry in wet environments with a slight trade-off in breathability.

### Midsole Technology





The midsole is the cushioning and stability layer between the upper and the outsole.

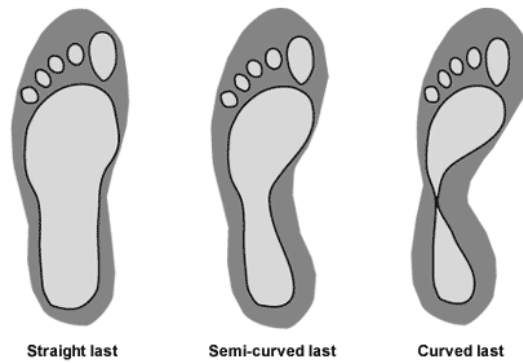
- **Synthetic leather** is a supple, durable, abrasion-resistant material derived principally from nylon and polyester. It's lighter, quicker drying and more breathable than real leather. Plus, it requires no (or very little) break-in time and therefore reduces the chance of blisters.
- **EVA** (ethylene vinyl acetate) is a type of foam commonly used for running-shoe midsoles. Cushioning shoes often use a single layer of EVA. Some will insert multiple densities of EVA to force a particular flex pattern.
- **Posts** are areas of firmer EVA (dual-density, quad-density, multi-density, compression-molded) added to create harder-to-compress sections in the midsole. Often found in stability shoes, posts are used to decelerate pronation or boost durability. Medial posts reinforce the arch side of each midsole, an area highly impacted by over-pronation.
- **Plates** are made of thin, somewhat flexible material (often nylon or TPU) that stiffens the forefoot of the shoe. Plates, often used in trail runners, protect the bottom of your foot when the shoe impacts rocks and roots.
- **Shanks** stiffen the midsole and protect the heel and arch. They boost a shoe's firmness when traveling on rocky terrain. Ultra light backpackers often wear lightweight trail runners with plates for protection and shanks for protection and support.
- **TPU** (thermoplastic urethane) is a flexible plastic used in some midsoles as stabilization devices.

### **Shoe Lasts**

The "last" refers both to the shape of a shoe and also to the form, or mold, around which a shoe is constructed.

When referring to the shape of a shoe:

- A **straight last** is appropriate if you are an over-pronator or have a flexible, flat arch. It helps to control inward motion.
- A **curved last** is designed for under-pronators with rigid, high arches. The curved shape promotes inward motion.
- A **semi-curved last** represents the middle ground. It is appropriate for neutral pronators.



When referring to the shape of a shoe:

- **Board-lasted** shoes are made with a piece of stiff fiberboard glued to the upper and then to the midsole/outsole. These shoes offer the stability and motion control needed by over-pronators.
- **Slip-lasted** shoes are made by sewing the upper into a sock, which is then glued directly to the midsole/outsole without any board in between. These are flexible and well cushioned for the supinator.
- **Combination-lasted** shoes feature board-lasting in the rear half for motion control and support, which slip-lasting in front for cushioning and flex. This is the most common approach and can be used a wide range of foot types.

### Other Shoe Components

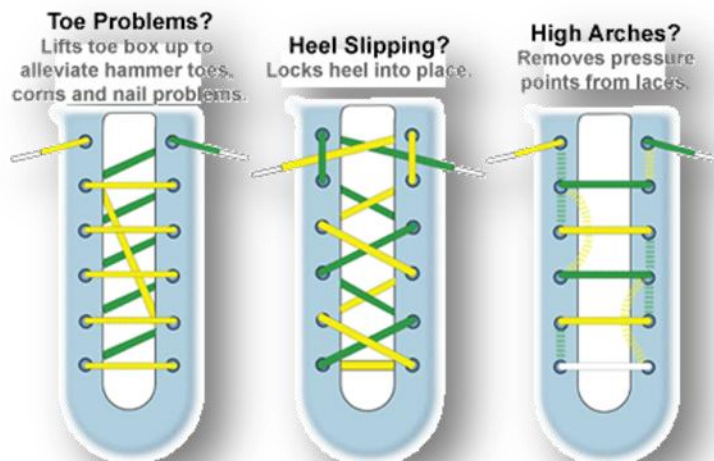
- **Heel counter:** This refers to the rigid structure around the heel. It provides motion control and is sometimes supplemented with a heel wedge, which adds support and cushioning to the heel. It can help those runners who are bothered by Achilles tendonitis.
- **Medial post or torsion bar:** These are located on the sides of shoes to help control excessive inward or outward motion. They are designed for the over-pronator or supinator.
- **Outsole:** The outsole is where the rubber meets the road, so to speak. Most road shoes are made with carbon rubber's hard, durable material in the heel. Blown rubber—which provides more cushioning—is often used in the forefoot. Trail runners tend to have all carbon rubber outsoles to better withstand trail wear, while road-racing shoes are frequently all blown rubber to reduce weight.

## Fit and Lacing Tips

When trying shoes on:

- **Try on shoes at the end of the day.** Your feet normally swell a bit during the day's activities and will be at their largest then. This helps you avoid buying shoes that are too small.
- If you **wear orthotics**, be sure to bring them along. They impact the fit of a shoe.
- Consider **custom footbeds (insoles)** such as Superfeet. Shoe manufacturers tend to provide generic insoles with their shoes since many runners use orthotics or, increasingly, custom footbeds. By using a custom footbed, you get improved cushion, stability and a better fit. These are great for people with back problems or who run long distances.

Lacing techniques for various foot types:



## **Shoe FAQs**

**Q:** How snugly should a running shoe fit?

**A:** You should have a thumbnail's length of extra space in the toebox. This helps you avoid losing toenails since your toes won't jam against the end when running downhill or when your feet swell. The width should be snug but allow a bit of room for your foot to move without rubbing. Laces should be snug but not tight.

**Q:** What is the typical lifespan of a running shoe?

**A:** In general, a pair of running shoes should last between 300 to 500 miles of running (three or four months for regular runners). This varies depending on your running mechanics. Take a look at your shoes. While the uppers will often look good, check the midsole and outsoles to see if they are compressed or worn.

**Q: If I wear an orthotic to correct my pronation, do I still need a motion-control shoe?**

**A:** You may be okay with a neutral shoe, but a motion-control shoe offers the most additional support.

**Q: Can I use a road shoe for running trails?**

**A:** Absolutely, just keep in mind that a trail shoe will give you more traction on rough or loose surfaces than a road shoe.

**Q: If I supinate, can I wear a shoe that is for over-pronators?**

**A:** You shouldn't. It's best to go with the shoe that coordinates with your body mechanics to avoid any injuries.

**Q: Is it okay to do a race or long run while wearing new shoes?**

**A:** The best approach is to do a short run first to see how your new shoes feel. You want to make sure the shoe is right for you before hitting a trail or pounding the pavement in a race.

*By Linda Ellingsen*

**Questions?**

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### **Week 3 Workout Plan**

Workout 1—Start with a brisk 5-minute warm-up walk. Then alternate 90 seconds of jogging and 2 minutes of walking for 20 minutes. Follow that with a 5-minute cool-down walk.

Total Workout = 30 Minutes

Workout 2—Start with a brisk 5-minute warm-up walk. Then alternate 90 seconds of jogging and 2 minutes of walking for 20 minutes. Follow that with a 5-minute cool-down walk.

Total Workout = 30 Minutes

Workout 3—Start with a brisk 5-minute warm-up walk. Then alternate 90 seconds of jogging and 2 minutes of walking for 20 minutes. Follow that with a 5-minute cool-down walk.

Total Workout = 30 Minutes

### **Break it Down**

Remember, to be a runner you must have the right equipment, be determined, faithful, diligent, and focused. Same goes for being a Christian!

### **Tip of the Week**

**Wear good running shoes.**

“Don’t skimp on your shoes. A good pair of running shoes should last you 400 to 500 miles and is one of the most critical purchases you will make.”

—John Hanc, author  
*The Essential Runner*