

One of the good things about running is that it's relatively cheap compared to other sports and leisure activities.

Rita says, "All you need is a good pair of running shoes and a proper sports bra."



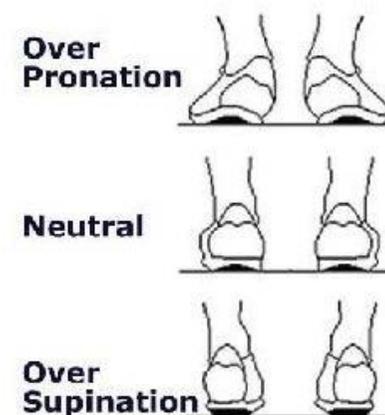
### So what sort of shoes should I buy ?

There is no such thing as a best brand, best model or best make of shoe and providing that the shoe passes the basic Dudley Ladies quality criteria detailed below, then the final choice is down to fit and personal preference.

Most of the population "over pronate" - that is to say that they roll their feet inwards too much when they walk or run. All the major shoe manufacturers have a range of shoe models designed to prevent this. These are called "stability" or "motion control" shoes and correct the over-pronation to varying degrees, with different shoes acting in different ways to prevent it.

Don't be swayed by jargon from the glossy magazines, there is no substitute for trying out several different models, from several different brands, to see which model works best for you.

Every runner is different in the way they run. Different running shoes suit different people, so with the cost of running shoes being what they are, when you eventually find a model of shoe that suits you, then stick with it.



### How do I go about buying a suitable pair of shoes and what do I have to look for ?

**1. Go to a specialist running shop** such as Sweatshop, Black Country Runner, Birmingham Runner or Sutton Runner. Don't go to a general "Merry Hill" type sports chain. You need an experienced shop assistant to watch you run in different models to see how they affect your running style and if they have got a Footscan System, Treadmill or other measuring equipment, then even better.

**2. Go during the week** when the full time staff are there - they will usually be more expert than part-time Saturday staff. Try to go when the shop is not going to be busy (avoid lunchtimes) and preferably in the afternoons when your feet

are warm and fully expanded, so that the staff have time to help you and you've got a better chance of choosing the right fit for you.

**3. Go straight to the women's section**, if the shop hasn't got a women's section then walk straight out and don't bother looking any further. The vast majority of women have narrower heels than men and if the shop hasn't got a women's section the chances are that you'll end up with a male or uni-sex shoe which will be too big around the heel, rub up and down and not give you adequate support.

**4. The heel fit is the most important part of the shoe**, make sure that the shoe does not move up and down on your heel when laced correctly and that there is plenty of room in the toe-box to allow for expansion when your feet get hot.

**5. Run in the shoes.** Don't just put them on, run around the store in them and if they'll let you, then running up and down the street in them is even better. You need to feel comfortable in them, as well as be reassured that they have the right degree of stability for you. If the shop won't let you do this, go to one that will.



### **Below is the Dudley Ladies Guide to Choosing a Good Pair of Training Shoes.**

**STEP 1 - If you know that you over-pronate**, look for a pair of shoes with either a reinforced heel counter or grey higher density mid-sole on the inside (medial) part of the sole. (If you over-pronate, your old shoes will either be excessively worn down on the outside of the heel or the medial side of the heel counter will have collapsed). If you are a neutral runner then just make sure that the mid-sole (That's the white bit of rubber between the sole and the uppers) is at least 1" thick at the heel end.



**STEP 2 - Pick up the shoe and press / squeeze the Heel Counter with your finger and thumb.** The cup that surrounds your heel at the rear of the shoe should be strong and firm. You should not be able to collapse it



**STEP 3 - Some Heel Counters extend quite high up the back of the heel.** These are called Achilles Protectors but do nothing of the sort and if they are too firm and inflexible may cause injury. So make sure the top of the Heel Counter is soft and bendable.



**STEP 4 - Try and bend the Sole of the shoe in the middle.** If you can bend the shoe, heel to toe then put it back, it will not have enough support for you.



**STEP 5 - Try and bend the Toe Box area of the Sole of the shoe where your actual toes bend.** If you can't flex the sole here then put the shoes back, they will be too rigid for you.



**STEP 6 - Try to twist the shoes like you where wringing out a cloth.** If you can twist them appreciably then put them back because they won't give you any lateral support.



**If the shoe, like the one in our example above, passes all these tests then the final choice comes down to personal preference and fit.**

### **Will my old trainers be alright?**

It depends if they passed the above Dudley Ladies test or not and how old they are. If they were bought from a High Street store with fashion or utility in mind, then they are unlikely to have sufficient support or resilience and if they have been well used the midsole may have become compacted and not provide sufficient cushioning.

## How long will running shoes last?

How long is a piece of string? The life of a shoe depends upon all sorts of variable factors that differ from person to person. It depends upon your weight, your running style and how many miles you run per week etc. However as rough guide think about changing them anywhere between 300 to 800 miles.

You will be able to see when your running shoes are past it when the midsole loses its bounce and cushioning (you often see deep creases or signs of stress on the outside of the midsole). A good running shop will tell you whether your shoes have more miles in them or need to be replaced.

## Do I need a sports bra?

Even women with a modest bust should wear a sports bra for the simple reason that running without one is just downright uncomfortable.

There are three basic types, Encapsulated bras which separate and support each breast in it's own cup, Compression bras that flatten the breasts to the body and Combination bras that compress and separate. It was originally thought that the encapsulated bras would be better for bigger breasted women and the compression type for the smaller woman but we know of bigger girls that would rather have the compression sort and vice versa, so it really is down to personal choice and you may have to try on several different brands until you find the one that is comfortable, does not rub your skin and is right for you.



The best sports bras to go for these days are seamless and made of technical fabrics such as polyester or Supplex that 'wick' moisture away from the body, ensuring you stay dry and comfortable as you sweat.

For more information on bras go to [Girl Power](#) on the RealRunner web site, [Less Bounce](#) or [Girls Run Too](#).

## **What else do I need?**

Running is a very cheap sport to get into and apart from shoes and a bra; all you need to get started is a t-shirt or vest, shorts or leggings and some socks. You don't need to spend a lot of money on special designer running gear unless you want to make a fashion statement.

As you get more in to it and run further and longer in all weathers, you may want to buy one or two technical or breathable garments. These are clothes which wick perspiration away from the skin and stay relatively dry. Cotton t-shirts can become a bit wet and sticky if you sweat a lot or absolutely waterlogged if you run in the rain, whereas breathable / technical clothes remain comfortable for longer. Technical gear can however be expensive, and you most certainly do not need it at first. You might however promise yourself a DriFit top when you run your first race or a Gortex running jacket for you birthday.

## **Are there any other accessories?**

Oh sure, if you want to spend some money you can buy everything from heart rate monitors and stopwatches to elastic laces, from water bottles to reflective vests. You don't really need any of this stuff, however, you can always buy it later if and when you get more and more into running.