

How Old Are Your Running Shoes?

By Eunice Ramsey-Parker, DPM, MPH, Clinic Administrator, Foot Center of New York



Summer's here and the time is right ... for getting on your feet!

Lots of people wait for the warmer weather to start running and walking for health or

pleasure. I really applaud the desire to get moving. Before you start though, ask your doctor if you can. Then, there are a few more considerations.

First, how fit are your feet? You might want to consult with a podiatrist, who will consider the health of your feet as well as what your gait says about your body's mechanics. He/she may prescribe custom orthotics (inserts) for you to improve those

mechanics and protect your feet. The podiatrist will consider: whether you have a high or low arch and therefore how much cushioning you might need; if you pronate (that is, if your foot rotates incorrectly) when you walk; if you already have Achilles tendinitis, plantar fasciitis, or another injury.

A podiatrist is also a good source of advice about the type of shoe you need and what brands will work for

you. Whether you are walking or running, you will need a shoe specifically designed for that sport.

If you have already been running or walking, the time is actually always right for looking at your shoes and determining if they are too worn to keep using. Wearing worn-out shoes can lead to injuries of the feet, ankles and/or knees. Are the shoes worn on the bottom and where? Look at the outer sole – does

it look worn, have wrinkles, or is disintegrating at the edges? Are the heels worn down on one side? Is the inner sole so compressed from wear that it has no spring? All of these are signs that you need new shoes; there are others signs to look for. Most runners have personal markers that signal when they should replace their shoes: e.g., if they've been worn for 200, 300, or 500 miles; if they look/smell bad,

etc. And don't forget the socks – they should be new enough so they don't slip and bunch around your toes.

Have fun and run safe!

Dr. Eunice V. Ramsey-Parker, DPM, MPH, is Clinic Administrator of the Foot Center of New York, located at 55 East 124th Street between Park and Madison Avenues. Learn more about the Foot Center at www.footcenterofnewyork.org.

From The Pharmacy to Technology, Exploring Options for Managing Pain

Maybe your knees aren't what they once were and a leisurely walk around the block has become a painful ordeal.

Perhaps too much time hunched in front of the computer has left your shoulders an aching mess.

Young or old, you're in good company. More than 11 percent of Americans suffer from chronic pain, according to the National Institutes of Health, and are looking for ways to rid themselves of those aches – even if just temporarily – so they can enjoy life without wincing and groaning.

"People can experience chronic pain for

a number of reasons," says Dr. Ronald Shapiro, medical director of Physicians Technology LLC. "They may have had an injury. They may have arthritis. Sometimes just sitting too long at the computer without a break can lead to shoulder problems."

Although anyone can experience chronic pain, an NIH study showed that women, older people and non-Hispanics were more likely to report pain. Asians were less likely.

Shapiro says there are a number of options patients can turn to for treating pain. Some of those include:

- Pain-relieving medication. Both over-the-

counter and prescription medications are used by millions of Americans. Those medications do provide relief, although the Centers for Disease Control recently urged physicians to cut down on the amount of opioids they prescribe because of the risk that patients can become addicted to these narcotics, as well as the alarming increased incidence of fatal prescription-medication overdose.

- Physical therapy. A good physical therapist can do wonders for helping to alleviate a patient's pain and assist them in achieving a more active lifestyle than they might have imagined. The downside is that the cost

of those weekly visits can add up.

- Complementary health approaches. The NIH study says that many people turn to such alternative approaches to pain relief as yoga, massage and meditation. The NIH says those may be able to help with managing pain and other symptoms that are not consistently addressed by prescription drugs and other conventional treatments.

- Technaceuticals. Technology is emerging as an alternative option for temporarily relieving pain, especially as a replacement for medication. Shapiro, for example, has been involved in research in that area and co-invented with

David B. Sutton a device for home use called the Willow Curve (www.willowcurve.com), a low-level smart device that treats joint pain. Because it's also a smart computer, the device assesses the condition of the joint and delivers a targeted digital treatment to temporarily relieve pain. A variety of ailments can be treated with such technaceuticals, including arthritis, general joint pain, knee pain, tennis elbow and rotator-cuff injuries, among many others.

"The opportunity is out there to improve the quality of life for anyone who suffers from chronic pain," Shapiro says. "A person shouldn't feel that

they just have to endure it. Whether it's technology, physical therapy or something else, they have options that can make their day-to-day living a lot better."

Dr. Ronald Shapiro is medical director and co-founder of Physicians Technology LLC, and is co-inventor of the Willow Curve (www.willowcurve.com). Shapiro's early research in evaluating drug-free pain management led to breakthrough advancements in safe and effective joint-pain relief by combining digital thermal kinetic, photonic and laser-like technologies.