



Getting you to the Finish Line: Alternating Shoes – A Low Tech Injury Prevention Tactic

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REMINDER: To reduce coronavirus exposure, get vaccinated, practice social distancing by maintaining at least six feet between yourself and others, wash your hands often, and wear a facemask. To learn more, visit the Advocate Aurora Health COVID-19 Resource Center: www.aah.org/COVID-19

In any given training year, studies estimate that up to 70% of recreational and competitive runners will sustain running related injuries with most triggered by overuse (i.e., micro trauma). That's a lot of training that's being missed or modified. How can you decrease the risk of injury to allow you to keep running?

Studies that analyze running injuries and prevention use expensive high tech equipment and movement experts to examine running mechanics, cadence, impact forces, etc. to help determine ways to decrease injury risks.

If you don't have access to this level of equipment and expertise, what can you do? Are there any current studies that review low tech or easy strategies for decreasing the risk of injury? Fortunately, there are – and a few have some interesting results.

One study surveyed a group of 264 amateur runners over a 22-week period; participating runners voluntarily provided multiple pieces of information. One of the hypotheses that researchers considered was the injury occurrence rate between runners who trained in the same pair of shoes versus those that alternated shoes. Surprisingly, the group that alternated shoes was 39% less likely to have running-related injuries compared to the group that only ran in one pair of shoes.

Researchers felt that their findings supported multiple reports that showed different shoe components could influence the amount and type of stresses applied to the musculoskeletal system. In simpler terms, by alternating your shoes, you can affect the impact and type of repetitive stresses that occur during running.

The negative side of alternating multiple pairs of shoes during training is the initial cost. However, over the long run (*pun intended*), the decreased injury risk and increased time each shoe is worn before you "cull it out of the herd" makes the cost a wash.

If you are looking for a higher tech option to decrease your risk of injury, assist a return to running following an injury, or want to be sure that your mechanics are as efficient as possible, Aurora Sports Health offers a Performance Running Program. Our running experts can help you reach the finish line safely and faster by analyzing your running gait, evaluating your flexibility and strength, and recommending training strategies. To learn how a running specialist can make a difference in your next run, visit:

<http://www.aurora.org/running>

When movement causes pain, Aurora Sports Health is here for you with Free Injury Evaluations. And, if physical therapy is recommended, Direct Access scheduling allows you to start treatment and begin feeling better right away – check with your insurance provider to confirm Direct Access coverage. Free injury assessments are easy to schedule at [aurora.org/FreeInjuryEval](http://www.aurora.org/FreeInjuryEval) or scan the **QR code**.



References:

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Relph, Nicola et al. “Running shoes for preventing lower limb running injuries in adults.” *The Cochrane Database of Systematic Reviews* vol. 2019,7 CD013368. 4 Jul. 2019, doi:10.1002/14651858.CD013368

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