

# Multiple advantages to running

By Alan Barichievich

Running has advantages. It burns more calories per minute than walking. It's a powerful stress reducer. Running also reduces the risk for heart disease, diabetes, osteoporosis, and depression.

If you're active and want to try this vigorous exercise, here's where to start.



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## Sweet spot

Proper running technique is more important than shoes. Try running barefoot. Where your foot lands, usually between your heel and fore-foot, is your "sweet spot." Land on your sweet spot, roll forward, and push off. Now, try with shoes.

## The right shoe

Type of running shoe depends on your foot type and surface you run on. Road shoes can work on trails, however, the sole may lack traction and rock protection.

## General rules for arches:

- High arch: chose a neutral shoe.
- Medium arch: neutral or stability shoe.
- Low arch: stability shoe.

Try on different shoes to determine which brand gives the best all-around fit. If a particular running shoe works for you, change the pair every 300 to 400 miles, but not the shoe.

## **Running form**

Running itself does not cause injuries. It's how you run.

Your body will thank you in the long run for proper form. Hold your head up in a natural and comfortable position. Look ahead at the view and terrain. This helps build and maintain a strong posture, while creating a more efficient run. Keep your entire upper body relaxed and your shoulders low and loose. Relax your hands and try and keep elbows at a 90-degree angle. Run tall with a slight forward lean and straighten your torso up to its natural position. Efficient distance running requires a slight knee lift, a quick leg rotation, and a short stride with your foot landing under your body.

## **Terrain variation**

Research shows no significant injury difference from running on various surfaces. Run on all kinds of surfaces. This challenges the body with slight changes in muscle activity which, in turn, helps reduce risk of injury.

When running hills, shorten the stride and maintain a flat running surface cadence, the foot strikes per a minute. Lean into the hill without bending at the waist and use your arms to boost locomotion up the hill. If you feel winded and out of breath, gear down and adjust your cadence to a slow and steady pace. On long hills, I look for a goal object – a rock, tree, or sign – up ahead and break the hill down into “little victories.” It motivates me and takes my mind off the

hill.

### **Gear and hydration**

Training outdoors, especially in the mountains, can be challenging and in extreme conditions even dangerous. Wear temperature-appropriate gear. Find clothing made of wick performance materials and wear a hat to shade your face and head. Lastly, stay hydrated before, during, and after your run with water and an electrolyte drink.

Barton Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine offers a comprehensive running program and a customized orthotics assessment. For details, go online.

*Alan Barichievich is the director of Barton Health's Rehabilitation and Sports Medicine. Alan and Caroline Barichievich will share more tips at a free presentation on July 8 at Lake Tahoe Community College.*