

As spring weather is fast approaching, the urge to hit the local high school track or park trail arises.

Before you head out to the running store to get a new pair of shoes, take these five easy steps.

The last thing you want to do is end up with knee pain or plantar fasciitis before the summer weather gets here.

Step 1- Hang Ten

Step 2- FTS [Fit The Shoe] Test

Step 3- Grab/Look/Match

Step 4- Ground Control Test

Step 5- Buy

You can do each of these easy tests at home and save yourself a lot of joint and muscle pain.

## Step 1

This is a simple low-tech test to get an idea of what type of foot you have:

- Pronator
- Supinator
- High arch
- Flat arch
- “Regular” arch

You will need:

1. 1 cup of water
2. Paper bag [cut and open it up]

Then:

1. Pour the cup of water on a flat, solid ground area
2. Take two steps forward in the moist area
3. Repeat, but this time walk in the already cut-and-opened paper bag

4. Use your smartphone to capture a photo of the kind of foot you likely have

This will make the buying process easier and more clear when you talk to the shoe salesman.

## Step 2

Once you have captured a picture of your footprint after walking in the paper bag, you can ask for shoes that match your footprint.

This is important because it's when folks like to choose and buy the cute, cool-looking shoe on the shelf.

**You main goal is to fit the shoe to your foot, and NOT THE OTHER WAY AROUND.**

## Step 3

This step will not only save you lots of muscle and joint pain, but a lot of moolah as well

1. Grab two pairs of shoes you wear week in and week out.
2. These can be casual or work shoes.
3. Then look for rounded edges along the sole of each shoe.

Here is where we, as physical therapy professionals, come in; with a keen eye and orthopaedic knowledge, we can assess your need for arch support inserts and sometimes even orthotics.

Right now your DIY assessment is to match the picture of your water footprint to those shoes.

**Answer the following:**

1. Are the outer edges of my shoes rounded and balled? Is the heel footprint small and “slim”?
2. Does the forefoot of the shoe appear worn off, or is it in fairly good shape for being a favorite?
3. Does the footprint picture show most of the ball of your foot and perhaps toe watermarking?

With these answers you are more likely to hit the ground with a shoe that will fit and feel natural and supportive (instead of invasive).

## Step 4

Now you've seen and gotten a better idea of what your foot looks like.

You also have a fair assessment of how you wear out your shoes when your foot hits the ground.

It's time to locate a store that allows you to go out.

I mean literally go outside their clean environment with your favorite picks.

Try to spend at least five ACTIVE minutes per shoe. What I mean by "active" is not the usual pretend-jogging/shuffling/heel-raising stuff we often see at the running shoe store.

Now for the last but toughest test...

## Step 5

With your top three choices, think about how frequently you will be using these shoes.

I recommend getting two sets of shoes to rotate per season/quarter.

Many folks report using this approach, which has not only helped them avoid injuries, but also allows for needed bodywork.

**There you have it: five simple steps to follow before you go out and buy your next pair of shoes.**

If you feel that your feet are too oddly shaped to find a good shoe, I invite you to contact me.

The best way to do so is via email – [jc@jcarlosfitlab.com](mailto:jc@jcarlosfitlab.com).

We could then schedule a virtual call to help you sort out your specific issues.