

Proper Equipment



Proper Equipment: Gearing Up For Success

By TNT Coaches Dan & Kelly McCann

Shoes:

Running shoes are specially-designed to support certain foot, body & stride types.

The best thing to do, when choosing the pair that's right for you, is have an associate at a running store take a look at your feet (Do you have a high arch? low arch? regular arch?) and how you walk (Do your feet pronate in? Supinate out? land neutrally). Have them suggest a few good options that will suit you. (The brand that's right for me may not be the brand that's right for you.)

- The shoe you do choose should feel great right off the bat – you should not need to “break them in.”
- Even though your training may include a fair bit of walking, you still want to buy “running” shoes.
- Running shoes should be replaced every 400 to 500 MILES. If not, you're risking a host of injuries: joint pain, foot pain & shin pain. Your running shoes should be 1/2 to a full size bigger than your “regular” shoe size because your feet will swell when you run and you need plenty of room in the toebox. If your toes are crammed in the front of the shoe, you could develop bruised or black toenails.

If you come back from a run/walk feeling more “beat up than usual,” it may be a sign your shoes are worn out. Another indicator? Look for “compression ridges” on the mid-sole of your shoes.

Socks:

Like proper shoes, quality running socks are also key.

Rule #1 -- Cotton is rotten. Look for true "running socks" made with synthetic fibers, names like "Coolmax," "Dri-Release" and "Smart Wool." These socks will wick moisture from the skin and keep your feet dry thus reducing your risk of blisters. Consider a double layer sock (like Coolmax Wrightsock) for added friction-reduction and blister protection.

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Remember -- Blisters are to runners what bruises are to football players. To reduce our risk, we need to cut down on friction & moisture. A good running sock will help do this. Products like **Sports Slick** and **Body Glide** will also help with blister prevention. They are considered a better alternative than Vaseline because they are medicated.

Apparel:

Just as with your socks, make sure that you buy tops and bottoms made from 'technical fabrics,' a fancy way of saying **NOT** cotton. The intent of clothing made of technical fabrics is to wick sweat away from your skin and pull it more quickly out of the fabric, instead of becoming soggy and wet, which will chafe your skin within a mile. (Imagine wearing a wet t-shirt or jeans on a run.)

For spring/summer running, you'll want to go with a few synthetic fiber training shirts. Bottoms include shorts and tights (long, crop or capri) – get what you are comfortable running or walking in. If you're so inclined, a mesh cap can help block the sun.

For winter running, layers are key.

- Your base layer (most important) should be made from a synthetic, moisture wicking material like Dri-Fit, Dri-Release or Coolmax. We are big fans of Under-Armour for our base layer. Once again, cotton is rotten when it comes to base layers. It gets soggy and wet.
- Your insulative, second layer is going to help trap warm air -- something like a fleece running top or synthetic fleece pullover.
- Your "shell" or third layer should be cold & wind proof or wind resistant at a minimum -- a running jacket or vest, for example. Additionally, for winter running, tights and/or fleece lined running pants are recommended. Layer according to comfort. You'll also want headgear (hat/ear muffs) and gloves.

What About Underwear?

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If your running clothes (shorts, etc.) have built-in underwear (runderwear) – that apparel is designed to be worn **without** underwear. If your apparel (tights, pants, etc.) does not come with a built-in liner, you'll want to wear underwear, but **NOT** cotton underwear. Instead, make sure you wear tight-fitting, non-cotton underwear so any moisture is wicked away and you avoid chafing.

Women also want to make sure they're fitted with a properly-sized and supportive sports bra.

Note – Sporting goods stores sell special laundry detergent for our synthetic fiber training clothes. It is specially-formulated to preserve the fabric and eliminate our training-related odors. After washing, it is best to let synthetic fiber training clothes air dry. (Drying these clothes in the dryer can clog their "pores," especially if you use dryer sheets.)

** Odds & Ends / Other Accessories:

- **Tracking/GPS device** – This will be used to track your activity. Today's smart phones have apps to provide you real time tracking.
- **Hydration Pack/Belt** – For those longer runs, you'll need to pack fuel and hydration especially if you don't have water fountains on your path or are not sure what to expect for fuel on your race route.
- **Sun protection** – You will be in the sun for an extended period of time while training. It is recommended to wear sun screen. We also recommend sunglasses and a hat.
- **Anti-chafing and Blister prevention** – Most runners and walkers have found themselves treating chafing and blisters on their feet. As you increase miles, it will increase the chances you will be dealing with chafing and blisters. Two good products are Body Glide and Sports Slick.
- **All gear** should be thoroughly "trouble-shot" before race day. Wear nothing new!