

Here is a checklist you can use as a quick reference guide when shopping for foot-healthy shoes. These are the key questions to ask yourself when handling and assessing any shoe you might potentially buy.

DOES THE SHOE YOU'RE CONSIDERING:

- Have a toe box that's widest at the ends of the toes (not just a toe box that's wide at the ball of the foot)? Possess a healthy-foot-shaped design?
- Have the ability to accommodate Correct Toes toe spacers without discomfort?
- Pass the Shoe Liner Test?
- Have a completely flat sole from heel to toe?
If the footwear has toe spring, is the toe spring
 - Rigid? (undesirable) or
 - Flexible? (acceptable)
- Have a sole that can be easily bent, folded, or twisted in multiple directions?
- Have an expansile upper that can be easily stretched?
- Have minimal cushioning?
- Have a low overall stack height?
- Possess a lightweight design?
- Avoid the use of any arch support or motion-control features?
- Incorporate a breathable upper?
- Have a straight (as opposed to curved) last design?
- Have a footbed that is completely flat (i.e., not concave) from side to side?
- Include a removable liner or a liner that is uniformly thin? If the liner is not removable, is it at least uniformly thin and made of durable and comfortable materials?
- Possess a reasonably grippy sole and a tread pattern that's not overly aggressive?
- Offer your foot an appropriate fit and feel? (Some women may need to try the men's version in order to achieve sufficient toe box width.)
- Have the ability to accommodate and work well with other helpful footwear (e.g., Injinji toe socks, Strutz foot pads, Naboso insoles, etc.)?
- Possess quality construction and high durability?
- Have an easy on/easy off design?
- Have a lacing system that's comfortable, effective, and allows for customizability?
- Feel largely comfortable on your foot right out of the box?
- Meet your standards for visual appeal? Is this a shoe that you will reach for when you leave the house to go out in public?

Answering these questions should give you a good sense of a particular shoe's suitability, but you are also most welcome to contact us at info@naturalfootgear.com if you have any other questions about a specific shoe model and whether or not it will support natural foot health.

