

Put your best foot forward

HOW OFTEN SHOULD YOU CHANGE YOUR RUNNING SHOES TO AVOID INJURIES?

FITNESS

TONI HETHERINGTON

Warmer weather inspires many of us to get outside and pound the pavement on runs or long walks to improve our health but, sadly, each summer the number of us left hobbled by foot pain also increases.

HCF health insurance claims data shows a rapid increase in people visiting a podiatrist in summer compared to winter due to injuries and niggles. There was a 173 per cent increase in members claiming for podiatry services in January 2022 compared with August 2021. This is a regular trend as it was up 148 per cent the summer before, and 168 per cent the summer before that.

Sarah Sweeney, founder of Sarah Sweeney Podiatry and HCF expert, says the data begs the question if we are putting our best foot forward each summer and how often we should be changing our running shoes to prevent injuries.

A HCF survey of more than 2500 Australians found more than half (51 per cent) say they only replace sports shoes once they start to fall apart with just 5 per cent replacing them at the start of every season.

One in eight people replace them once a year, or have several on the go at once so that they rotate them and only replace them every few years.

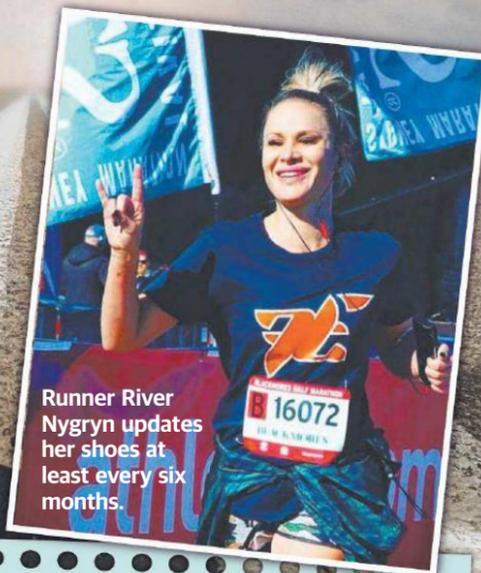
Sweeney says, as a general rule, you should change them twice a year to ensure they maintain adequate cushioning but other factors can also come into play.

"It depends on how much running you do. Usually about every 6-12 months for the average runner/walker but some of my patients who train for marathons, like to change them every three months," Sweeney says.

"An important indicator is making sure there is enough tread on the bottom of the shoe. Sometimes we feel the running shoes are fine but then we get a new pair and realise just how little support the old ones had."

MY BODY TELLS ME

The HCF survey found almost half of Australians (46 per cent) have



Runner River Nygryn updates her shoes at least every six months.



SARAH SWEENEY

sustained an injury from an individual sport. Of those, the most common injury-prone sports are running (35 per cent), walking (27 per cent) cycling (24 per cent) and weights training (18 per cent).

Sydney running enthusiast River Nygryn, 38, runs about 10km every day and says she is quick to change her shoes if she ever starts "to feel pain in my knees or ankles".

She says she works with a podiatrist to find the right shoe to fit her foot shape because she has high arches and needs support.

Nygryn changes her runners a minimum of every six months and says she notices an immediate change. "I can feel the difference immediately ... within two to three runs, you'll notice the comfort level is back, you're back on your game and your pace has improved."

Top tips to beat injury

Ease in slowly: Gradually build up the amount of time you exercise, the kilometres you walk/run and the number of days you are working out. The No.1 reason people injure themselves is going from zero to 100 too quickly without giving their body time to adjust and without slowly loading their muscles and tendons to be able to handle the activity.

Warm up and cool down: It seems obvious, but many people skip these steps. The warm-up prepares your muscles, joints, tendons and ligaments before exercise and the cool down can help prevent injury.

Stretch regularly: I tell my patients to stretch every day - even if it is just their calf muscles. This will increase the range of motion and prevent injury.

Ice your feet after activity: Activity causes inflammation in the muscles and ice is great natural effective way to reduce inflammation.

Invest in a good pair of shoes:

Book in to see your podiatrist to figure out what shoes works best for you. Your podiatrist can help you choose the best shoes depending on your activity - such as walking, running, netball, or gym work as all have different features to support the feet and body in the various activities.

Get regular foot checks: Regular skin and nail care at your podiatrist can prevent painful ingrown toenails and blisters as well as preventing or managing thickened toenails, corns and calluses. Consider a biomechanical assessment to look at exactly how your feet and body move and whether orthotics could help prevent or manage injury.

Don't wait if you feel pain: The moment you start to feel pain, book in with your podiatrist. Chronic injuries are much more difficult to treat. So it is best to book in at first sign of pain.

Source: Sarah Sweeney

BEHIND THE SCENES



WITH JONATHON MORAN

STEVE RODGERS

The Aussie actor, who plays the role of Professor Phillip Goodman in the play *Ghost Stories*, explains why he believes in love at first sight and wants to be Aquaman

What three things would be at the top of your bucket list?

Living in Italy for a year (at the bottom of the boot where you can swim heaps), travelling around Australia for a year, and living long enough to see the planet start to cool because we did the right stuff.

Have you ever looked up an old high school crush/unrequited love?

I had so many unrequited crushes. With the emphasis on "unrequited", looking them up would take too much time.

Favourite music artist and why?

Sharon Van Etten and Nick Cave are right up there, but it's my daughter Grace Rodgers' band Banana Farm. If you're in Sydney, check them out.

If you had a superpower, what would it be and why?

I wanted to be Aquaman as a kid. To swim underwater without a tank at the same time as being mates with the sharks would be very cool.

If you weren't acting, what would you be doing now for a career?

I'd be a travel writer, or hosting a talkback radio show (I wish).

What is your guilty pleasure in life, be that in music, entertainment, sport, food, any area?

I'm a diehard Swans supporter. I'm guilty of caring too much. I've been a member since the days when the SCG was so empty you could call out to a mate on the other side of the ground to get you a pie. I cried when we got into the Grand Final this week.

What was your first casual job and what are your memories of it?

When I was 12, I used to deliver medication from the chemist on my bike to old and sick people who were housebound. It was in Launceston where I grew up. I'm pretty sure that'd be illegal now?

What is your favourite karaoke song?

Friday I'm in Love by The Cure. It's a banger!

Do you believe in love at first sight?

Yeah, the first time I laid eyes on my wife, she walked out of the bathroom after a shower wrapped in a towel, singing Billie Holiday. I've been love struck ever since.

What is your spirit animal and why?

A polar bear. I look a bit like one, I swim like one, and I love eating sustainably.

Ghost Stories is playing at the Athenaeum Theatre, Melbourne, until October 30 before heading to Adelaide in December. For tickets and tour dates, visit ghoststoriesheshow.com.au