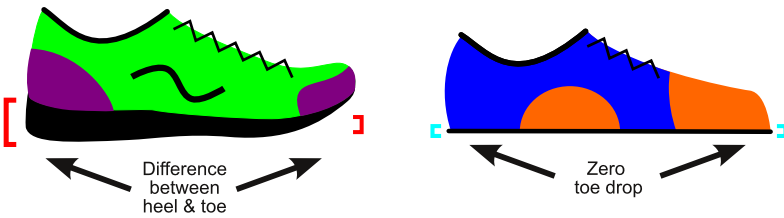


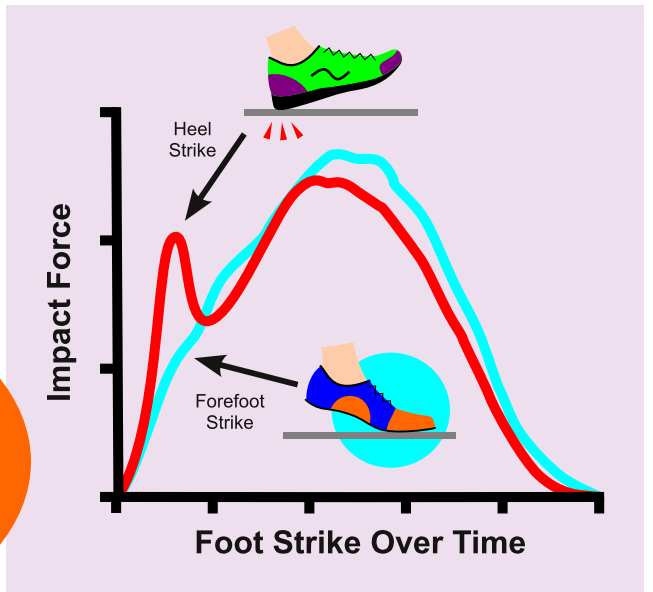
★ How to Choose Barefoot Shoes ★

At Soft Star, we believe barefoot is best! For thousands of years, humans have adapted to living and running with bare feet. Most modern shoes significantly change the way we use our feet, but going shoeless isn't always convenient. Sometimes businesses require shoes, sometimes you want a little more protection and sometimes the look and style of shoes is preferred. There are now many barefoot shoes that claim to offer the benefits of bare feet, but some do better than others. Here are a few key points to consider when choosing minimalist footwear:



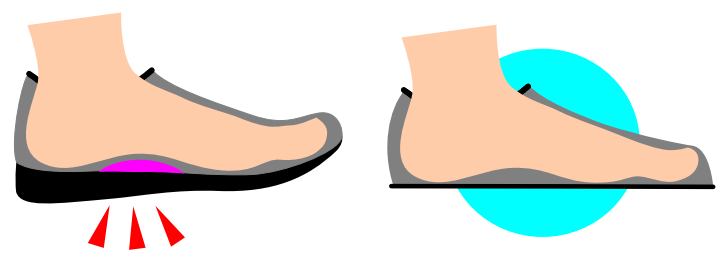
Low/No Heel-Toe Drop

Heel-toe drop is the difference between the thickness of a shoe's sole at the heel and the thickness at the toe. Most modern shoes add thick cushioning under the heels of shoes, which encourages people to strike the ground with their heels first when running or walking. This creates a harsher, more jarring impact than striking midfoot or forefoot first—the way most people walk and run when barefoot. Look for shoes with little or no heel-toe drop.



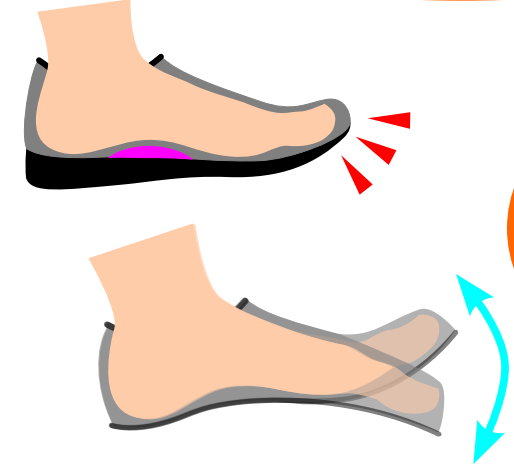
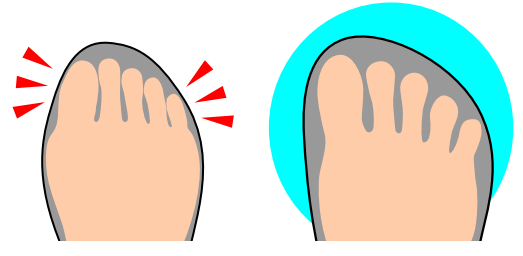
No Arch Support

Many shoes add extra padding under the arch of the foot. This was once believed to give comfort to people with weak arches, but recent studies suggest that arch supports may increase chances of injury by acting as crutches that prevent plantar muscles in the foot from flexing and strengthening properly. For a more barefoot experience, look for shoes without padding under the arch.



Wide Toe Box

The toe box is the space in the front of a shoe that surrounds the toes. Some shoes have narrow or pointed toe boxes simply because they make feet look smaller and more fashionable. If the toe box constricts the foot and does not allow toes to splay as they would when barefoot then the shoe may be inhibiting natural movement and growth. Look for shoes that allow your toes to spread!



Thin & Flexible Soles

When you wear your shoes, how do they look as you stretch and bend your feet? Shoes that force the toes to stay in an upward position may lead to pronation and foot disorders. A truly barefoot shoe that encourages natural movement will bend to follow the shape of your foot. Thin and flexible soles not only offer more freedom of movement, but also allow more groundfeel. Your feet relay information to your brain about what they sense when you walk and run, and your body reacts accordingly. Thick and rigid soles may block this connection. Keep soles skinny, flat and bendy!

Lightweight

This one should be obvious. Heavier shoes not only require more energy to move, but add more strain from torque on your joints. Nothing is lighter than bare feet, so the lighter the shoe, the better.



Barefoot shoes for happy, health feet. Handmade in the USA!
www.softstarshoes.com ★ (866) 763-2525

If you are new to barefoot shoes, go slow! Transitioning too quickly could lead to injury. This infographic is not intended to be used as medical advice.