

The new fads in running these days are what runners consider the “barefoot” or “minimalist” shoes. Shown in the picture below, these shoes are the next best things to running barefoot. In the article “Is Running without Running shoes for you? We give you the Facts” by Molly Newman, specialists on the subject of running examine the way to go from your traditional running shoe to this new style. But it is “important to understand the rationale behind minimalist running before attempting it yourself” claims Leif Rustvold, a blogger and long time runner. It has been proven that “up to 40% of minimalist runners experience pain and in many cases suffer more injuries than traditional shoe wearers” according to Dr Terry Smith, DPM, because people are switching from their traditional sneaker right into these new barefoot sneakers. “Slow and steady is the best way to approach your minimalist training program” says author Molly Newman who looked to Ute Mitchell, a brand new barefoot sneaker owner for her training tips. Put yourself in a “pre-hab’ to get ready for the transition”. The most important thing is to gradually change from one sneaker to the other. “Active Stretching and Strengthening...can dramatically reduce your chances of injury” along with “slowly increasing your time of usage in the barefoot shoes” says Ute Mitchell. “Running in minimalist shoes one or twice a week is an excellent way to approach part of training” agrees Dr. Smith.



Not being an avid runner myself, I looked to the expert at Upper Perk Physical Therapy, Stephen Moyer MSPT, and current owner of a pair of barefoot sneakers. You may from time to time see Stephen running on the treadmill at work, down 663 to get to work, or you might even hit him as he comes flying out of the woods from a trail run. Nonetheless he has very good insight from not only a runner’s perspective but also from a physical therapist point of view. “I save my barefoot shoes for trail running because the ground is more forgiving than the road. The road is too unforgiving for me to run more than a few miles. So on the road I prefer Brookes or Addidas shoes”, says Stephen Moyer. He also has a motto for these shoes: “Unnatural surface, unnatural footwear; natural surface (trails), natural footwear (barefoot)”.

#### Works Cited:

Newman, Molly. “Sports Guide, Adventure, Fitness, Travel for the Mountain West”. Salt Lake City, UT. Volume 29 Issue 2.