THINGS TO LOOK FOR WHEN PURCHASING WALKING SHOES

There is no one best shoe. The best shoe for you is the one that fits **you** best, the one that gives you the proper support, flexibility, cushioning, and compensates for any stride problems you may have, such as overpronation. Each person's feet are different. Walking is a natural rolling motion from heel to toe, your foot bending at the ball on each step. If you're walking shoes are not flexible enough, your ankle and shin muscles end up fighting your shoes and you set yourself up for injury as well as tired legs and feet. Many shoes marketed as walking shoes are not flexible. Most running shoes are flexible, but may not bend in the right place.

Twist them: Grab the shoe with both hands and twist in opposite directions. It should twist a little.

Bend them: Try to bend the shoe in half, pushing the heel towards the toe. The shoe should bend at the ball of the foot. Some running shoes bend in the middle of the arch, which is not the right place for walkers.

Poke them: Place the shoe on a level surface. Poke the toe down, the heel should raise up off the surface. This natural curvature will help you roll through the step.

Flexible: You must be able to bend and twist the shoes. When you take a walking step, your foot will flex as you roll through a step from heel to toe. If the shoe is too stiff, your foot will fight it with each step.

Low Heel: Walking shoes should have a relatively flat heel. Walking shoes **should not** have a high heel; it should be no more than an inch higher than the sole under the ball of the foot.

No Flare: Because walkers strike with the heel first, you do not want a big flared heel. In fact, a slightly undercut heel is preferred. Look for heels that are even undercut at the back to allow for good heel strike and roll through the step.

Definition of slip last: In shoe construction, the shoe upper is pulled over the last and then attached to the midsole. The resulting shoe is lighter and good for those with rigid feet who need more motion.

Slip lasted shoes: A sewn seam runs the length of the shoe. Most flexible, less stable. Good construction for feet with high arches.
Board lasted shoes: A cardboard board runs the length of the shoe. Very stable, less flexible. Good construction for flatter feet.
Combination lasted shoes: Cardboard in the rear half, and a seam up the front half. More flexible than board lasted shoes, and more stable than slip lasted shoes.

Definition of shoe last: The form on which a shoe is constructed - resulting in the inside shape of the shoe. Lasts may be straight, curved or semi-curved.

Look at the bottom of the shoe to see which last the shoe was formed on.
Curved last: A thin strip connects the heel and ball of the foot. Makes the shoe light and flexible and is intended for people with a **high arch**.
Semi-curved last: is more flexible than the straight last, yet more stable than the curved last. It has a wider strip connecting the heel and ball of the foot. It is intended for people with **normal arches.**
Straight last: are the least flexible and the most stable. They are intended for people with **flat feet** than board lasted shoes, and more stable than slip lasted shoes.

Wet Test: (arch, flat) To tell what type of foot you have, dunk your foot in water and then place it on a surface that will leave an imprint of your foot. 1. If the ball and heel of your foot are not joined or are joined by a narrow band, then you have a high arched foot. 2. If they are joined by a wide band, then you have a normal foot. 3. If they are joined by a really wide band and have little flair where the arch should be, then you have a flat foot.