

# Walk **NEBRASKA**

## Are Your Shoes Up to Speed?

**Q:** You probably know when to replace your tires but when do you replace your shoes?

**A:** Replace your shoes every 300 to 500 miles. (That's usually every four to six months.)

What if you don't know how many miles are on your shoes? Just like tires, a visual check may help:

- ✓ When you put them on a flat surface, do they look like they're out of alignment? Do they lean inward or outward?
- ✓ Do they show signs of uneven tread wear?
- ✓ And, how do they feel?

If you've gotten used to how your shoes feel as they deteriorate, you may not think they feel "bad." But if you notice pain in your feet, ankles, legs or knees, it could mean that your shoes are worn out. Some experts say you should go to the store every four to six months and try on a new pair just to remind yourself about how your shoes *should* feel.

Shoes are the most important piece of equipment for walkers but they're confusing to buy because there are so many different kinds. Lloyd Nesbitt, a podiatrist who wrote "How to Buy Athletic Shoes", says if you participate in a sport more than three times a week, buy shoes made for that sport. Otherwise, experts say, if you just plan on walking, buy walking shoes. If you think you might progress to running, buy running shoes. They work for walking, too. Multi-purpose shoes such as "cross trainers" may be a good choice if you plan to use them for different activities.

Good fit is essential so wear the same socks you'll wear for walking. Try shoes on late in the day or right after walking. By then, your feet will have swollen and you'll get the most accurate test. But don't shop when you're rushed. Take time to put on both shoes and walk around on a hard surface.

Be sure to work with a qualified salesperson to test for proper fit. It's important to get the correct length and width and you can't go by the size you've been wearing because feet change as you age. Also, it's hard to check the fit yourself. Remember the "press on the end of the toes" test? That's to see if there's a thumbnail's width (about ½ inch) between the longest toe and the end of the shoe. You can't do this yourself because when you bend over, your foot shifts and keeps you from getting an accurate reading.

**Know how. Know now.**



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