

Change your shoes, Change your life

Presented by Petra Fisher Movement & Anya's Reviews

Transition pathway details

- 6 months of daily activities in minimal footwear strengthens foot muscles about 60%. No further strength increase is observed after more time in minimal shoes. [Reference](#).
- 8 weeks of walking in minimal shoes create similar foot strength increases as 8 weeks of foot strengthening exercises. [Reference](#). However - strength increases don't necessarily improve function
- You're in charge - adjust timing, exercise, amount of walking and amount of shoe cushion/support as needed
- Everyone's 'end point' is unique - it's not about being 'barefoot' - it's about finding the shoe combo that works for your feet & your life - so that might even mean sticking with orthotics but using a transitional shoe so your toes can spread more.

1. Baseline Recommended Pathway

Think: Progressive transition over 12-36 weeks, use exercises to improve function and maximize benefits

Time in phase	Type of shoe	Steps in minimal shoes (12 week option)	Steps in minimal shoes (30 week option)
12-36 weeks	Transitional + minimal (recommended)	Weeks 1 - 2: 2500 steps/day 5x a week	Weeks 1 - 6: 2500 steps/day 5x a week
	OR	Weeks 3-4: 5000 steps/day 5x a week	Weeks 7-12: 4000 steps/day 5x a week
	Conventional + minimal	Weeks 5-8 7000 steps/day 5x a week	Weeks 13-18 6000 steps/day 5x a week
	OR		

Time in phase	Type of shoe	Steps in minimal shoes (12 week option)	Steps in minimal shoes (30 week option)
	Minimal with insole + minimal	Weeks 9-12 9000 steps/day 5x a week	Weeks 19-24 8000 steps/day 5x a week Weeks 24-30 10000 steps/day
After 12-30 weeks	Full time minimal	<p>Assumes daily walking ~ 8000-10000 steps a day..</p> <p>Use transitional shoe or insole for days with more than usual walking or if it feels better.</p> <p>Strong feet are not necessarily fully functional - if you're missing key foot capacities then consider doing additional exercises so you mitigate your risk of future injuries.</p>	

2. Foot intensive lifestyle pathway

Think: Use cushioned transitional shoes during intense activities (e.g. work shifts); make a slow progressive transition to more minimal shoes for other activities

Prioritize restorative foot exercises like stretching and massage if feet are feeling tired and overloaded

Exception: Runners need to choose if they want to run with cushioned shoes or adapt to very minimal shoes by drastically decreasing running times (for up to two years). See the book Older Yet Faster for guidelines & technique for very minimal shoes.

Time in phase	Type of shoe	Example time in minimal shoes
36 weeks	<p>Switch right away to cushioned transitional shoes for the bulk of your intense activity time.</p> <p>Add time in a more minimal-style shoe progressively for lighter activities</p>	<p>Week 1-6 Spend about 1/12 of the rest of your time (when not doing intense activities) in barefoot/minimal shoes.</p> <p>Week 7-12 Spend about 1/6 of the rest of your time (when not doing intense activities) in barefoot/minimal shoes.</p> <p>Week 13-18 Spend about 1/3 of the rest of your time (when not doing intense activities) in barefoot/minimal shoes.</p> <p>Week 19-24 Spend about 1/2 of the rest of your time (when not doing intense activities) in barefoot/minimal shoes.</p> <p>Week 25-30 Spend about 2/3 of the rest of your time (when not doing intense activities) in barefoot/minimal shoes</p> <p>Week 31-36 Spend about 3/4 of the rest of your time (when not doing intense activities) in barefoot/minimal shoes</p>
After 36 weeks	<p>Intense activities: Transitional shoe</p> <p>Other times: Full time minimal, but use transitional shoes if experiencing discomfort</p>	Assumes most of your walking is during your intense activities

3. If you're in pain recommended pathway

Think: Immediate transition to cushioned transitional shoes, lots of foot exercises for 8-12 weeks. At this point, start adding barefoot time and adjust according to how your feet feel.

Time in phase	Type of shoe	Example timeline in minimal shoes	Other considerations
8- 12 weeks	Transition shoe	Week 1-8: Focus is lots of foot exercise. Try barefoot time at home if desired.	
12-36 weeks	Transitional shoe Plus Minimal shoe	<p>Week 8: Test out about 1000 steps in a minimal shoe.</p> <p>Weeks 8-12 If your feet feel good the next day, spend 4 weeks walking 1000 steps daily in a minimal shoe</p> <p>Weeks 13-16 If your feet are still feeling good, progress to 3000 steps a day in your minimal shoe</p> <p>Weeks 17-20: progress to 4500 steps per day in minimal shoe</p> <p>Weeks 21-24: progress to 6000 steps per day in minimal shoe</p> <p>Weeks 25-30: progress to 7500 steps per day in minimal shoe</p> <p>Weeks 30-34: progress to 7500 steps per day in minimal shoe</p> <p>Weeks 34-36: progress to 8000-10000 steps per day in minimal shoe</p>	<p>A bit of pain during walking is usually ok, it's pain the next day that's your warning sign.</p> <p>Continue to use your transitional shoe or an insole whenever you need more support.</p> <p>If your pain starts to increase, back off on the minimal shoe walking time and add more exercises.</p> <p>Watch out for orange flags/pain and adjust exercise program if you need to.</p>

4. If you're in orthotics recommended pathway

Time in phase	Type of shoe	Example timeline in minimal shoes	Other considerations
8 weeks	Transition shoe plus orthotics	Week 1-8: Focus is 10-20 minutes of daily foot exercise.	<p>Continue with foot exercise program throughout transition.</p> <p>Watch out for orange flags/pain and adjust exercise program if you need to.</p> <p>Add orthotics or support if your body is giving you warning signs.</p>
9-16 weeks	Transition shoe	<p>Weeks 9-10: Remove orthotic for 1500 steps/day</p> <p>Weeks 11-12: remove orthotic for 3000 steps/day</p> <p>Weeks 12-14: remove orthotic for 4500 steps/day</p> <p>Weeks 15-16: remove orthotic for 6000 steps/day</p>	
17-30 weeks	Transition shoe	Full time transition shoe, no orthotic	
30 - 60 weeks	Transition shoe + minimal shoe	<p>Week 30: Test out about 1000 steps barefoot or in a minimal shoe.</p> <p>Weeks 30-34: If your feet feel good the next day, spend 4 weeks walking 1000 steps daily in a minimal shoe</p> <p>Weeks 35-38: If your feet are still feeling good, progress to 3000 steps a day in your minimal shoe</p> <p>Weeks 39-42: progress to 4500 steps per day in minimal shoe</p> <p>Weeks 43-46: progress to 6000 steps per day in minimal shoe</p> <p>Weeks 47-50: progress to 7500 steps per day in minimal shoe</p> <p>Weeks 51-54: progress to 7500 steps per day in minimal shoe</p> <p>Weeks 55 & onwards: progress to 8000-10000 steps per day in minimal shoe</p>	

Orange flags along your journey

Course correct if you notice or plan to change any of the following:

1. Newly arising body pain (especially big toe joint, heel, mid-foot, knee, hip)
2. Toe gripping pattern (newly arising)
3. Newly arising or worsening pelvic floor issues - incontinence, prolapse, pain
4. New calluses that you didn't have before (Inside of big toe, middle of forefoot)
5. New or worsening foot issues like bunions or hammertoes
6. Activity patterns - holiday with lots of walking, new job with time on your feet, walking on a new-to you surface

Shoe features & foot functions

Feature	Benefits	Cautions
Toe shaped toe box	Allows natural functional alignment of toes	None - all feet can benefit
Thin, flexible soles	Key for strength, mobility, allows big toe extension, better pronation & supination	Can be uncomfortable or lead to overload - adapt & use with care. Avoid if you currently have: stress fracture, hallux rigidus, neuroma.
Flat, no heel rise (zero drop)	Improves loading on forefoot (bunions, metatarsalgia, plantar fascitiits), better for hips, knees, spine & pelvic floor	Most bodies will benefit. Can be an overload for the Achilles or plantar fascia - adapt with care if you have tight calves or tendonitis
Flat, no toe spring	Rebalances top & bottom of foot muscles (plantar fasciitis, hammertoes)	Most bodies will benefit. Hallux rigidus or hallux limitus may require thicker soles with some toe spring.
Fully attached	Allows toe muscles to work correctly, no gripping	None - all feet can benefit

