

# Evolve

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**For \$99 in 90 minutes you can find out where you stack up against the national population!**

## How Safe is Shoeless Running?

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Have you heard the hype about barefoot running? With books like *Born to Run* by super athlete Christopher McDougall and products like Vibram Fivefingers shoes encouraging the trend, people are more curious than ever. But, is this really a safe way

to run? Currently, the scientific



community is split on the subject. Though there is no conclusive evidence supporting this style over shod (shoe)

running, there is some interesting reasoning behind running without wearing those designer kicks!

### What is the theory of barefoot running?

It's easy to forget that we've been running (continued on next page)

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- *Health risk factors*
- *Posture and alignment*
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- *Core strengthening*
- *Ability, balance and coordination*
- *Aerobic endurance*

You will leave with a customized exercise prescription that can be done anywhere. We will help you get to your fitness goals! Call us today to schedule!

Saturday October 16<sup>th</sup>  
At Body Dynamics

## How Safe is Shoeless Running?

without shoes for much longer than we have been running with them. Burning asphalt, sharp hazards and unknown terrain all seem a good reason to keep your shoes on, but there are a few reasons why barefoot running may be helpful.

Without shoes, the natural motion of the foot occurs as we run. This may strengthen intrinsic foot muscles and increase proprioception, the sense that tells us whether we are moving with enough effort and keeps us aware of where each body part is in relation to each other. In other words, we may be getting more information from our body without our shoes acting as interference.

Other suggested benefits of barefoot running suggested include changing the foot strike for improved natural shock absorption and lower peak heel pressure (Lieberman et al, 2010). This has been mentioned in many biomechanical and kinematic studies looking at shod versus barefoot running.

Research shows that the body can naturally adapt to the lack of shoes by shorting step length and increasing stride frequency (B. De Witt et al, 2000).

**How do I know if barefoot running is right for me?** At this point, it is challenging to tell if barefoot running is the style that is superior for your personal running mechanics. We suggest scheduling a running assessment to appropriately assess whether the style is correct for you. However, certain populations can be advised against barefoot running based on other complicating factors.

### Just Say No to Barefoot Running If:

You have decreased foot sensation (individuals with diabetes and with peripheral neuropathy.) There is danger of unknowingly causing injury to your feet from pebbles, glass, or debris on the road due to lack of protective reflex.

You have gait mechanics that are affected by lower extremity deformities which would increase risk of injury.

You have recurrent ankle sprains or chronically weak ankles. Studies have shown that during barefoot running, the foot strikes the ground in more plantarflexion, or a pointed foot, which will increase

the risk of ankle sprains (McNair PJ and Marshall RN, 1994).



**How do I start?** If you are considering initiating barefoot running, there are a few things to consider prior to the first run. First, remember the key is slow progression. Build up the time spent running without shoes in small increments to assess the body's response to the new style and discuss any new aches or pains with your physical therapist. Begin walking barefoot on various surfaces at every opportunity to increase your proprioception and foot's ability to adapt to various surfaces (Yessis, 2000). Rather than running completely without support, Vibram Fivefingers shoes have been shown to be similar to barefoot running while offering a small amount of protection to the sole of the foot (Squadrone R and Gallozzi C, 2009). Another option is to continue running in your current shoes, but begin to supplement midfoot or forefoot strike for heel strike. This will make the transition easier when running barefoot for the first time as the barefoot running mechanics will be similar to what you have practiced in your shoes. Remember to stop running if you feel pain. Again, the safest bet is to consider a running assessment at BDI to further personalize your barefoot running program. Whatever you decide remember to be safe, have fun and enjoy your run!

## Announcements & Events

**Canned Food Drive** - bring in canned goods to assist with Arlington Food Assistance Center for the month of October and we will match your contribution can for can!

**Body Dynamics is on Facebook and Twitter!**

**5K Cancer Treatment and Prevention Walk!** Run with us October 3<sup>rd</sup>. First 5 Registrations through BDI are FREE! Call for details!

