

Barefoot or not barefoot..... That is the question: Part Two

I recently posted an article on the uses of barefoot training and the importance of foot position when carrying out various different movements. If you haven't read this article [click here](#) to view it now.

In today's post I will use an example to talk through why different activities may require different training shoes or lack of a training shoe. As I alluded to in my previous post each individual is indeed just that... an individual and it is wrong of us to pigeon hole people and athletes to one training shoe/barefoot training regime. The type of activity the person is partaking will be a major determinant of what to use in addition to the ability to gain a stable foot and ankle position to carry out such an activity.

To use myself as an example of three different activities in which I will alter what I wear on my feet. The activities include:

1. Squatting in the gym
2. General wear (at work, walking, general daily activities)
3. Road running (training for a marathon)

Regarding squatting in the gym I lift barefoot. The reason for doing this is that I feel that I can use the floor and my foot position to gain a strong stable base of support prior to lifting. I am able to feel the floor and use it to my advantage.

By almost screwing my feet into external rotation, without actually moving my feet, I can generate torque through the floor, bringing my feet out of a position of relative pronation and thus at the same time preventing knee valgus and hip internal rotation. In addition, I feel I can sit through my hips better and in doing so I am in a stronger position and as a result can shift more weight.

Conversely, I tend to wear barefoot training shoes for general activities throughout the day. I have a pathological right ankle which needs regular rehab predominately through ankle mobility drills. I have found that wearing a barefoot training shoe has enabled me to maintain my ankle range of movement in comparison to before I started wearing barefoot style shoes. This is ultimately because I am using/maximising the range at my ankles even during everyday activities and thus complements my ankle mobility rehab.

Finally, I am currently training for my first marathon, cant say I am enjoying the training but hopefully will all be worth it in a few months time! As a result I am running alot of the road/pavements which I dont have alot of experience of doing, as I have predominatley practiced sports based on grass.

For road running, I feel more comfortable in a neutral training/running shoe as opposed to a barefoot shoe. I feel as though the additional support and cushioning of the shoe provides a better and more comfortable run and therefore I use such a shoe to run. In theory a barefoot shoe might seem more advantageous given my ankle pathology however this has not proved to be in case in my example.

To bring it all together, using myself as an example, it is clear that different activities require different footwear types. As athletes, weekend warriors or practitioners we should be aware of the fact that differing activities require different provisions and going one way or the other, being anti-barefoot or pro-barefoot, is maybe not the way to do it. Maybe being aware that different circumstances require different training equipment is the way to go and adapting our approach in that way.

Hope this has been of interest. If so, please share.

Thanks for reading

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