

What is the Odometer Reading on Your Running Shoes?

By John Ruibal, MS, RD, CSSD, LD

One of the first questions I ask when a runner has concerns about injury's, tightness, or just a little pain in a joint or muscle, is how many miles do you have on your running shoes?

Many running shoes like the ones you find at most specialty running stores will last 400 - 500 miles before they are completely broken down. Depending on how hard you are on your shoes you may find that your legs might start talking to you after you have around 250 miles on the odometer. Here are a couple of ways to get that full 400 - 500 miles out of your running shoes.

One technique is to alternate your running shoes every other workout. This will extend the life of the running shoe to 400 - 500 miles. A technique that I like to use is to put about 200 - 250 miles on a pair of new shoes using them for the key workouts during the week. Key workouts are the workouts you run at a faster pace like tempo workouts and track workouts. Long runs on the weekend are also considered a key workout. I then will use these shoe shoes for my easy workouts and buy a new pair to run my key workouts. This technique has worked for me over two decades and as kept me running with minimal injuries.

Many of you that are running a fall marathon have been training since this summer. This is also a good time to check the mileage on your shoes. If you have over 250 miles on your running shoes, this would be a good time to get that new pair of shoes to get you through the next phase of training leading up to your goal race. Make sure you get fitted for your new pair of running shoes at a specialty running store that will take the time to get you in the correct shoe for your foot type, foot strike and running form.

One final thought about running shoes. You probably have figured out that a lot of running is as much about mental training as it is physical training. The shoes that you race in should only have a few miles on them prior to you getting to the starting line. I recommend getting the shoes you will race in about 3 weeks from your race. I recommend putting 25 or so miles on your shoes and then putting them back in the box until race day. Mentally when you get these new shoes out the day before your race, your mind set will change, you will start to focus on that goal that you have trained so hard for. Then on race day when you slip into your new shoes you will be ready to run. There is nothing like putting on a new pair of running shoes.