



# Standard Test Method for Comparison of Rearfoot Motion Control Properties of Running Shoes<sup>1</sup>

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## INTRODUCTION

During a typical running step, the foot first makes contact with the ground on the rear lateral border of the shoe. At first contact between the foot and the ground, the foot is normally in a supinated or neutral position relative to the lower leg. During the first 50 to 150 ms of the period of ground contact, the foot rotates about the ankle and subtalar joints to a more pronated position. Pronation is a combination of eversion and abduction of the subtalar joint and dorsiflexion of the ankle joint.

Excessive pronation and possibly an excessive rate of pronation are believed to be risk factors in common overuse injuries among runners. Other risk factors include a runner's anatomical predisposition, (for example, joint alignment, bone curvature, joint laxity) previous injury history and training errors (for example, a sudden increase in the duration or intensity of training). Running shoes have been shown to influence pronation. Shoe design factors which have produced measurable effects on lower extremity motion under laboratory conditions include sole hardness, sole height and width, sole geometry and the presence or absence of orthotics and stabilizing devices.

## 1. Scope

1.1 This test method covers the measurement of certain angular motions of the lower extremity during running, specifically, the frontal plane projection of the pronation and supination of the lower leg relative to the foot ("rearfoot motion") and methods by which the effects of different running shoes on rearfoot motion may be compared.

1.2 As used in this test method, footwear may refer to running shoes, corrective shoe inserts (orthoses) or specific combinations of both. The effects of orthoses may vary from shoe to shoe. Therefore, comparisons involving orthoses shall be qualified by the specific style of shoes in which they are tested.

1.3 This test method is limited to the measurement of the two dimensional, frontal plane projection of the relative angular motion between the lower leg and the foot ("rearfoot motion"). It is not a direct measure of pronation or supination, which are three dimensional motions.

1.4 This test method is limited to running motions in which the heel makes first contact with the ground during each step.

1.5 This test method is applicable to measurements of rearfoot motion made while subjects run on a treadmill or while they run overground under controlled conditions.

1.6 The values stated in SI units are to be regarded as the standard. The inch-pound units given in parentheses are for information only.

1.7 *This standard does not purport to address all of the safety concerns, if any, associated with its use. It is the responsibility of the user of this standard to establish appropriate safety and health practices and determine the applicability of regulatory limitations prior to use.*

## 2. Referenced Documents

- 2.1 *ASTM Standards*:<sup>2</sup>  
[F539 Practice for Fitting Athletic Footwear](#)

## 3. Terminology

3.1 *Definitions of Terms Specific to This Standard:*

3.1.1 *ankle joint*—the joint between lower leg and foot formed by the articulations of the tibia and fibula with the talus.

3.1.2 *footstrike*—initial contact between the foot and the ground at the beginning of the stance phase.

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<sup>2</sup> For referenced ASTM standards, visit the ASTM website, [www.astm.org](http://www.astm.org), or contact ASTM Customer Service at [service@astm.org](mailto:service@astm.org). For *Annual Book of ASTM Standards* volume information, refer to the standard's Document Summary page on the ASTM website.

3.1.3 *maximum rearfoot angle*—maximum value of the rearfoot angle recorded during the stance phase.

3.1.4 *peak angular velocity*—maximum rate of change of the rearfoot angle between footstrike and the occurrence of maximum rearfoot angle.

3.1.5 *pronation*—three dimensional motion of the foot relative to the lower leg, combining eversion and abduction of the subtalar joint and dorsiflexion of the ankle joint.

3.1.6 *rearfoot angle*—the angle between the lower leg and the heel, viewed from the posterior aspect and projected in the frontal plane.

3.1.7 *rearfoot motion*—relative motion of the heel and lower leg during the stance phase.

3.1.8 *stance phase*—the period of a running step during which the foot is in contact with the ground.

3.1.9 *subtalar joint*—alternative name for the talocalcaneal joint.

3.1.10 *supination*—three dimensional motion of the foot relative to the lower leg, combining inversion and adduction of the subtalar joint and plantar flexion of the ankle joint.

3.1.11 *talocalcaneal joint*—the joint formed by articulations between the talus and the calcaneus.

3.1.12 *time to maximum rearfoot angle*—elapsed time between footstrike and the occurrence of maximum rearfoot angle.

3.1.13 *total rearfoot motion*—difference between the maximum rearfoot angle and touchdown angle.

3.1.14 *touchdown angle*—value of the rearfoot angle at the instant of contact between the foot and the ground during a running step.

#### 4. Summary of Test Method

4.1 The rearfoot angle is defined by reference to markers placed on the lower leg and heel of the human subjects. While subjects run on a treadmill or overground the motion of the lower leg is recorded using a high-speed camera system positioned behind the subject and aligned with the subject's direction of motion. The time history of the rearfoot angle during the stance phase of running is determined by frame-by-frame analysis of the recorded motion. This process is repeated for each subject running in each of two or more footwear specimens. For each combination of subject and specimen, average values of maximum rearfoot angle, time to maximum rearfoot angle, total rearfoot motion and peak angular velocity are calculated. Analysis of variance is used to determine whether there are significant differences in rearfoot motion parameter between the specimens.

#### 5. Significance and Use

5.1 This test method allows the rearfoot control properties of running shoes or corrective orthoses within shoes to be compared provided they are tested concurrently and under identical conditions.

5.2 Tests of this type are commonly used in the development and performance testing of running shoes and other

in-shoe devices. Careful adherence to the requirements and recommendations of this test shall provide results which can be compared between different laboratories.

NOTE 1—The variance in rearfoot motion due to differences between shoes is generally smaller than the variance between subjects. Direct comparisons between shoes tested in different experiments is therefore not possible.

#### 6. Apparatus

##### 6.1 Running Surface:

6.1.1 *Treadmill*—A powered treadmill shall be used.

6.1.2 *Runway*—The runway used for overground running trials shall be a level surface with a minimum length of 15 m (50 ft).

##### 6.2 Means of Determining Running Speed:

6.2.1 *A Calibrated Treadmill Speed Indicator*—For treadmill running, a calibrated means of determining the speed of the treadmill belt.

6.2.2 *Timing Apparatus*—For overground running, a timing apparatus shall be used to determine the elapsed time over a distance of 5 m (16 ft) with an accuracy of  $\pm 5\%$ . The average running speed,  $v$ , of the subject shall be determined by  $v = s/t$  where  $s$  is the distance traversed and  $t$  is the elapsed time.

NOTE 2—An acceptable timing apparatus can be constructed using light beams, photocell detectors and an electronic timer. Two light beam/ photocell detector units are positioned at head level and place 5 m (16 ft) apart and on either side of test track on which rearfoot motion data will be recorded. The photocell circuit is connected to the electronic timer so that breaking of the first beam starts the timer. Breaking of the second beam stops the timer, which thus records the elapsed time.

6.3 *High Speed Camera System*—A cinephotographic or video camera or other optical system capable of tracking the motions of the lower leg at a minimum frame rate or sample rate of 200/s. If no derivatives are to be calculated, a minimum frame rate or sample rate of 100/s is permissible.

NOTE 3—The minimum sample rate is based on the spectral composition of rearfoot motion at running speed of  $3.8 \text{ ms}^{-1}$  (8.5 mph). Tests conducted at higher running speeds may require higher minimum sample rates.

6.4 *Image Analysis Equipment*—Apparatus for determining the coordinates of markers on images from the high speed camera system, such as a digitizer, video processor or optical tracking system. The camera and image analysis equipment shall have a combined resolution such that the angle formed by leg and shoe specimen markers in a two dimensional plane normal to the axis of the camera can be determined with an error of less than  $\pm 0.5^\circ$ .

NOTE 4—Greatest accuracy is achieved if the centroid of a marker is digitized. The use of large markers may decrease digitizing accuracy.

#### 7. Specimens

7.1 *Acceptability*—The specimens may be any kind of footwear appropriate for use in or as a running shoe. The specimens shall be in the form of matched pairs (left and right).

7.1.1 *Shoes*—The specimens shall form matched pairs (left and right). All specimens shall be of the same size.

7.1.2 *Orthoses and In-Shoe Devices*—The specimens shall be in the form of matched pairs (left and right). All in-shoe

device comparisons shall be made using devices in the same pair of shoes worn by the same subjects.

**7.2 Number of Specimens**—Two or more specimens shall be compared in any trial. The maximum number of specimens that can be compared is limited by the number of subjects required to achieve acceptable statistical power.

**7.3 Number of Subjects:**

**7.3.1** The number of subjects shall be a minimum of four times the number of specimens.

**7.3.2** If specimens are to be presented to subjects in a balanced order, the number of subjects shall be a multiple of the number of shoes to be compared.

**8. Conditioning of Specimens**

**8.1** Condition specimens by being used for a minimum of 8 km (5 miles) of running prior to testing.

**NOTE 5**—The cushioning and stability of running shoes change rapidly during the first few miles of use. These characteristics stabilize after approximately 5 miles (8 km) of running (3500 footfalls) and then change less over the next 250 miles (400 km) of wear.

**9. Procedure**

**9.1 Experimental Design:**

**9.1.1** Conduct the test as an experiment with a repeated measures, within-subject design.

**9.1.2** It is recommended that the order in which specimens are presented to each subject should be balanced, not randomized. A balanced order of presentation requires that the number of subjects must be a multiple of  $n!$  ( $n$  factorial) where  $n$  is the number of shoes to be tested. If it is not practicable to use a balanced order of presentation, use randomized order of presentation.

**NOTE 6**—The statistical power of the test may be improved if a balanced order is used.

**9.2 Subjects:**

**9.2.1 Humans Subjects/Ethics Committee Approval**—Obtain the approval of all administrative bodies having jurisdiction over the use of human subjects in the laboratory or institution where the test is to be performed before any part of the test is begun.

**9.2.2 Informed Consent**—Obtain the informed consent of all human subjects shall in compliance with the American College of Sports Medicine’s “Policy Statement Regarding The Use of Human Subjects and Informed Consent” (1) current at the time of the test.

**9.2.3 Shoe Size**—The running shoe size of choice for all test subjects shall be the same. Measure size for all subjects with a Brannock device and reported to the nearest half size (Practice F539.)

**NOTE 7**—*Lower Extremity Evaluation*— In order to establish relationships between subtalar joint kinetics and the effects of different running shoes, it is recommended that the lower extremity of each subject be examined by a competent examiner in order to provide information on the sample population being studied. The evaluation should include a medical history of lower extremity injury, foot type, forefoot frontal plane alignment, rearfoot frontal plane alignment, tibial horizontal plane alignment, and range of motion of the subtalar joint. Determine the type of footstrike of the subject (rearfoot, midfoot, or forefoot striker) with a

force measuring platform, a pressure distribution measuring platform or an in-shoe plantar pressure measuring device. (See Cavanagh and LaFortune (2)). The training habits of each subject, including training frequency, weekly training distance and training pace should also be noted.

**9.2.4 Treadmill Experience**—If the test is to be completed while subjects run on a treadmill, the subjects should be experienced treadmill runners. If the subjects are not experienced treadmill runners, a minimum of one 20 min period of treadmill acclimatization training should be held prior to data collection.

**NOTE 8**—During treadmill acclimatization training, start subject(s) at a slower pace and the speed gradually increased until the speed is slightly below or a the test speed. The duration and number of practice sessions depends on the comfort of the subject with treadmill running. Some indication of the degree of comfort with treadmill running are seen in hip flexion and stride length.

**NOTE 9**—Subjects should wear their own shoes (that is, not test specimens) during treadmill acclimatization training.

**9.3 Marker Placement:**

**9.3.1 Leg Markers**—Place markers on the rear of each subject’s lower leg, at least 20 cm apart. Center lower marker on the Achilles tendon. Place the top marker below the gastrocnemius, and orient so that the transverse vertical plane projection of a line connecting the two markers is parallel to the transverse vertical plane projection of the axis of a lower leg (see Fig. 1).

**NOTE 10**—Clarke et al (3) describe the use of an apparatus for placing the markers in a repeatable manner. Specifically, a jig is used to find the geometric center of the knee joint. Markers are then centered on a line joining the knee joint center and the center of the Achilles tendon. The use of this test method is recommended.

**9.3.2 Specimen Markers**—Place markers on the midline of the rear of each specimen, a minimum of 5 cm apart, such that the line joining the centroids of the two markers are perpendicular to the plane of the sole of the shoe (see Fig. 1).

**9.4 Standing Calibration**—In order to correct for differences in marker positioning between subjects, determine a calibration angle for each subject measuring the value of the rearfoot while the subject is standing in a neutral position. For the purposes of this test method, the neutral position is defined as standing with the medial edges of the shoe heels 5 cm (2 in) apart and the feet abducted 7°.

**NOTE 11**—When calculating rearfoot angles, subtract the calibration angle from the recorded data.

**NOTE 12**—Clarke et al (3) have described a simple jig for controlling the position of the feet while the calibration angle is recorded.

**9.5 Accommodation Period**—All subjects should have a warm-up period of approximately 2 min on the treadmill or 10 to 15 trials overground. The subjects should run at a speed less than test speed.

**9.6 Control of Running Speed**—Select a single running speed and use for all subjects and all specimens. Control the speed and hold constant with a tolerance of +5 % or less.

**NOTE 13**—In common practice, the selected running speed is 3.8 m s<sup>-1</sup> (8.5 mph).

**9.6.1 Treadmill Running**—Set the running pace indicated by the calibrated treadmill speed indicator while the subject is running on it and hold constant.