

Running barefoot enhances performance

New study suggests shoes may not be as helpful as advertised and produce more injuries than running barefoot.

Nick Massa
Reporter

After decades of development to create the perfect running shoe with arch support, air springs and unique contours, a new fitness fad comes in — barefoot running.

The premise couldn't be simpler. It is a return to the days of the prehistoric man. A man who had to run miles a day hunting down or being hunted by wild animals with not even so much as thong sandals.

Elizabeth Anderson, head coach of the women's tennis team, said she has "not experimented with barefoot running."

Even today, members of a tribe in Mexico called the Tarahumara run multiple marathons a day, almost entirely barefoot.

Fancy running shoes did not come about until the 1970s, when jogging became a national craze. Along with these new shoes came a host of running related injuries not seen before.

Shoes allowed for elongated strides at the cost of proper running form. People began landing heel first with every step, as opposed to their ancestors who would land on the balls of their feet. Running on the balls of your feet is much better for your legs. Some scientists have suggested running with high heels is better for preventing injury than running with highly technical running shoes.

According to a recent article in Popular Science

magazine, landing heel first puts a shock of up to three times the person's body weight on their legs with each step, tearing up ligaments and cartilage in ways people had never faced.

The article goes on to say running barefoot can eliminate most if not all injuries sustained while running.

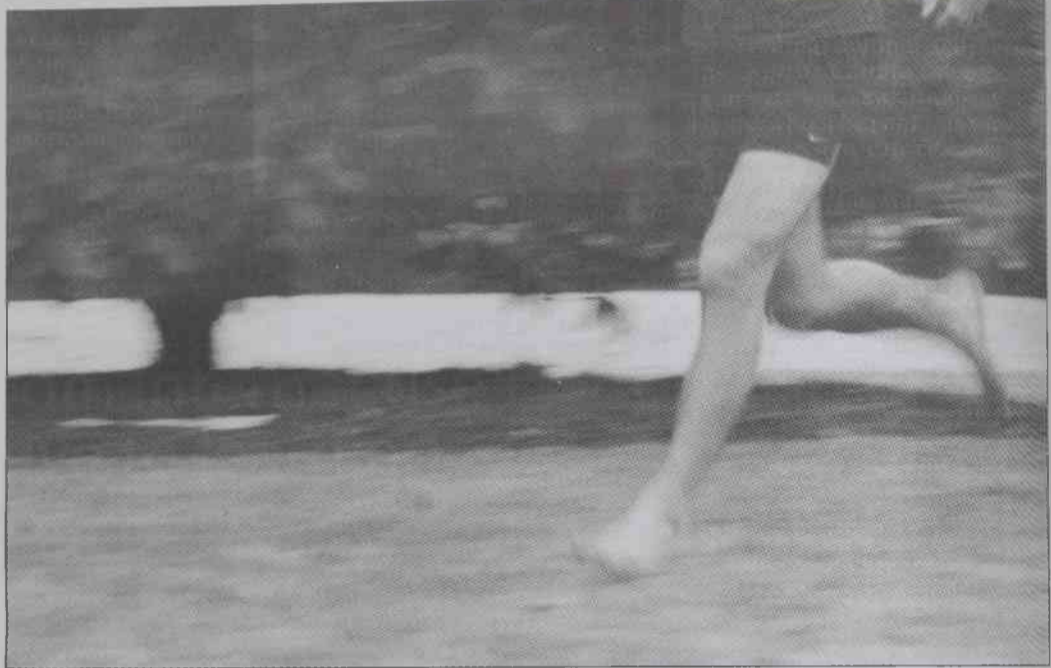
Many people are still skeptical, especially about running on things like asphalt.

According to Harvard University professor Dan Lieberman, who headed the study, "You can run barefoot on the world's hardest surfaces without the slightest discomfort and pain."

People who are worried about stepping on a sharp rock can take heart in knowing that the body has ways of toughening itself up — in just a few short weeks, calluses will form and further adapt feet for running barefoot.

Luckily, there are solutions for people who want to try running barefoot without the risk of stepping on something and getting hurt. A company called Vibram has created a shoe it calls the "five fingers" which is designed to fit the human foot exactly, from the shape of the heel to the five toe holes.

According to Vibram's Web site, the shoes provide "an increased sense of balance, greater agility and visibly improved posture."



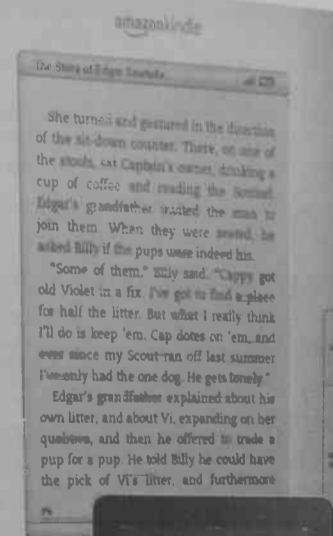
JUSTINE SCHULERUD | Photo Editor

Elon cross country runner Clay Sankey does double runs two times a week. He always runs his second run barefoot on the grass.

iPad: Innovative or redundant?

Students sound off on Apple's newest launch with high expectations

KINDLE vs. iPad



Kindle
Cost: \$500
Developed by Amazon
Screen size: 9.7 inches
Features: Works as an electronic textbook equipped with an E-Ink display allowing easier reading. The Kindle DX has 4 GB of storage, capable of holding 3,500 books.



iPad
Cost: \$500-\$829
Developed by Apple
Screen size: 9.7 inches
Features: Multi-touch screen allows users to view multiple pages, surf the Web, send and check E-mail, play games, write in a note-book, watch videos and search Google maps.



Information from PC World
Images courtesy of MCT Campus

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Apple debuted its premier technological advancement of the season, the iPad, on Jan. 27, and its impending availability could offer significant benefits to Elon students.

The new device is 9.7 inches long and one-half inch thick, weighing only 1.5 pounds. The Apple Web site boasts ultimate transportability and an unprecedented viewing experience when manipulating photos, video, Web and e-mail interfaces. All 140,000 applications that are available to iPhone and iPod touch users will be transferrable and accessible with the iPad.

Michael Shepherd, Elon University's Apple systems engineer, noted the iPad's potential to be useful to college students and professors in classrooms.

"I think this is just a first step from going from paper books to electronic versions," Shepherd said. "We've seen audio go from audiotapes to CDs to downloaded music stored on media devices. Time will tell if this new approach to college textbooks will catch on."

The device will allow its users to view crisp, detailed images and personalize the home screen with photos. Its monitor can be completely operated with the touch of the user's fingertips by way of a multi-touch screen. Accessories for the device include a stand and mouse.

But although a plethora of changes are evident, some Elon students are not impressed.

"It just looks like an oversized iPod touch," senior Amanda Keller said. She owns a MacBook Pro and a first generation iPod touch. "It looks like it and performs the same functions — it's only a bit bigger."

Junior Sydnie Krause said she wouldn't

buy the new product.

"I saw an ad and it looked snazzy, but it also looked like something I couldn't afford. I don't own any Mac products," she said. "I'm not a Mac person."

For those who fear that the iPad will require new knowledge to operate it, Apple notes that it is still host to a multitude of programs familiar to most MacBook users. It does not require additional software, either.

iTunes is still a dominant fixture on the home screen, and music can be played externally from built-in speakers or listened to with a Bluetooth device. The notepad application has been streamlined and manipulated to provide for more organizational capabilities and the iBooks app provides a source to buy and read books for leisure, similar to the Kindle device.

Its retail price starts at \$499 and ranges to \$829.

"I think the lower range is worth the price, but Apple should push a few more features in it. Camera, multitask support, Flash and video output support to make it just right," Shepherd said.

Apple's Web site offers a tab where potential customers can sign up to be notified of availability.

The device may offer significant improvement to both professional and personal endeavors.

"I think just like the iPhone/iTouch, these devices mold to your life-style," Shepherd said. "When you have a good balance of work and play tools at your dispense, it makes anything very competitive on the market."

Wi-Fi models of the device will ship in March and 3G models will ship in April.