

Expensive trainers are a waste of money

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Expensive trainers are not worth the money, finds a small study published ahead of print in the *British Journal of Sports Medicine*.

Cheap and moderately priced running shoes are just as good, if not better, in terms of cushioning impact and overall comfort, it concludes.

The research findings are based on a comparison of nine pairs of trainers, bought from three different manufacturers, in three different price ranges. The cheapest pairs were priced at £40 to £45, with the moderate range costing £60 to £65. The three most expensive pairs cost £70 to £75.

The 43 participants were not told how much any of the shoes cost.

Plantar pressure - the force produced by the impact of the sole hitting the ground - was recorded in eight different areas of the sole, using a special device (Pedar) attached to the shoes.

Different models performed differently for different areas of the foot. But, overall, there were no major differences among the shoes, irrespective of brand or price.

In fact, plantar pressure was lower in the cheap to moderately priced shoes, although this difference was not statistically significant.

Runners were also asked to rate the comfort of the shoes from “least” to “most comfortable imaginable,” using a validated graded scale.

Comfort ratings varied considerably, but there were no obvious differences among the shoes. And price was no indicator of comfort score.

Running produces sizeable shock waves to the bones of the foot, which radiate to other bones in the body. The force of the impact increases with speed and distance, say the authors.

Consequently, runners are prone to knee pain, stress fractures, muscle tears and osteoarthritis.

The type of cushioning in the soles of running shoes aims to prevent this damage, with expensive trainers deemed to be the most effective.

Source: British Medical Journal

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