

Running Shoes for Plebe Summer

Rules have changes over the last 3 years regarding wearing "running"(or all purpose athletic) shoes on I-Day and their use during Plebe Summer. In 2004, USNA sent out the make and model of the shoes that were to be issued on I-Day and we purchased these to have our son have more than one pair over Plebe Summer. Things have become more flexible regarding what shoes Plebes can bring, but I think they are still to be mainly white. (Red running shoes do not help one be a stealth plebe!) However, remember Semper Gumby and read all the paperwork sent to you and your Plebe! The information directly from USNA supersedes anything you read on a listserv or an article or a USNA friend.

Under normal conditions, running shoes are good for about 350-500 miles. Six weeks of vigorous training like Plebe Summer will trash a pair of good running shoes. A quick calculation - an easy 10 minute mile pace is 6 miles an hour, a minimum of 2 hours running/exercise per day, 6 days per week, 6 weeks = 432 miles. Having a second pair will help!

The mid-sole material in athletic shoes is engineered primarily with polyurethane. This material will wear out first. The cushion of the shoe will wear out (flattened mid-soles) before the tread. Over time running shoes lose stability and shock absorption capacity.

Shoes are important to the health and wellness of your Plebe. As shoes begin to give out, the body will begin experiencing some more than usual aches or pains in bones and joints, as well as more muscle fatigue, new tightness, or possible injuries. Injuries seen when shoes are not replaced frequently are shin splints, heel spurs, plantar fasciitis and stress fractures.

Have your Plebe buy a couple pair of new running shoes the first week of June. (They should be running on a regular basis in preparation for Plebe Summer, right?) They should wear both pair alternately over the month. Having multiple pairs of running/athletic shoes and alternating between them is a good idea because it can lengthen the life of the shoes. That gives the mid-sole time to decompress between use. Your Plebe can wear one of these on I-Day and should be able to be used during Plebe Summer along with the issued pair and you can bring/send the second pair on or around PPW. Both will be worn in, but not worn out!

When buying running shoes, lightweight racing shoes are meant only for competing; they should not be worn for training because they have sacrificed support and cushioning for speed. It is most important to look for better cushioning as well as how it feels on the foot.

No I'm not a member of the American Podiatric Medical Association... I don't even play one on TV! Nor do I have investments in New Balance or Nike. This comes from just a little experience from Plebe Summer three years ago and some research.

Shoes are a relatively cheap investment in preventative care and an easy I-Day "walk on" solution for your son or daughter's upcoming Plebe Summer.

