

## Running Journal Magazine - September 2016

### *Inspired Daily*

#### Care and maintenance of our two most important pieces of equipment

Hot and humid with a daily rain or thunder storm is basically the weather report all summer long in southwest Florida. After my week long summer running camp at the end of July, I was asked how I dry out my shoes. Let's face it, every run during the summer results in soaking wet shoes either from the rain or more likely, the sweat. So much sweat. A friend of mine was asked if she went swimming when she returned from a run one day this summer. I had to laugh because we all look like we hopped in a pool after every run no matter fast or slow we go, whether easy or hard run, short or long run. Here are few tips to help you care for the two most important pieces of equipment – your running shoes and your sports bra.

Starting with the shoes, I urge you to invest in a good shoe fan. What is a shoe fan? For me, it was one of the most thoughtful gifts my husband gave me the first year we lived in Florida. It is simply a small round fan that sits low to the ground, tilts, and has multiple speeds (including high, which is necessary for drying out my orthotics from an evening run so they are ready for the next morning). I used it every day that I ran or went to the gym so it was used six days a week over the past twelve years before it just stopped working. When I went to replace it, I purchased a fan that was too weak. It did not dry the shoes overnight so I returned it and my husband found the updated version of my original fan and now I'm back in business. I call it my shoe fan because that is literally it's only job.

After each run, simply remove the inserts from your shoes and lean them up against something then start up that fan. That's the basic shoe drying technique that I use. Shoes need up to 36 hours to fully dry out so add the fan to speed up that process. This is also why it is important to rotate at least two pairs of shoes. When the shoes start to smell bad then I add two additional steps to the shoe maintenance process. I soak the inserts and shoes with Lysol to kill the bacteria that causes the odor and then a light spritz of Febreze before I set them in front of the shoe fan. My method may not be completely scientific but it works for me and besides, I only get about 200 miles out of my shoes since I wear a lighter more minimalist shoe so I replace them every 1-2 months anyway. A standard training shoe should last about 300-500 miles.

When drying out shoes after a run in the rain or a real muddy run, you may want to rinse them thoroughly in cold water first to remove all the dirt and debris and then follow the steps above. Stuffing the shoes with newspaper can also help draw out the moisture from the inside a bit quicker.

My number one sports bra tip is that they should NEVER celebrate a birthday. Depending on how frequently you purchase new shoes, be sure to include regular purchases replacing those sports bras as well. You should have a minimum of three good sports bras so that you have one to wear today, one ready to go tomorrow, and one in the wash. To care for that sports bra investment, always use a mesh bag to keep them separate from the rest of your laundry and use the gentle or delicate cycle along with a more delicate detergent whenever possible. Skip the dryer and either hang or lay sports bras flat to dry to keep their shape and elasticity intact. Besides, dryer sheets wreak havoc on our moisture wicking apparel anyway.

A little extra effort and just a few extra minutes can keep your most important gear in great shape longer which saves you time and money in the long run.



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