

Earth® Shoe Breaking-in Instructions

Although it varies from individual to individual, the average break-in period (actually accommodation period) for the wearing of Earthshoes® is approximately two weeks. Within this time period you may or may not experience one or more of the following:

1. A feeling of listing backwards, in some instances actually feeling as though you are falling backwards. (Reason: Negative heel technology, displacing your heels below the balls of your feet.)
2. Experience tightness in your calf muscles. (Reason: Elongation of the calf muscles puts them on stretch which increases the force of the ensuing muscular contraction when walking or running.)
3. Experience aches, soreness and slight pain in one or both of your knees as you walk. (Reason: When walking, the heel strike -- with the heel being below the ball of the foot -- will allow the knee to naturally extend to full effect so that when you transfer your weight over the foot and leg, there is a more natural "screwing home" effect of the knee joint. This is the normal mechanism necessary to fully support your bodyweight without overtaxing the muscles in your thigh. Try to observe someone walking in high heels and see if they ever fully extend or straighten their knees when accepting their full bodyweight -- you'll be surprised to see how much bend or flexion there actually is!)
4. Feel as though you are walking up an incline even though you are on a level walking surface. (Reason: The negative heels naturally put your feet into a 3.7 degree incline, so you really are going uphill.)
5. Feel the long arch on the inside part of your foot stretch and may even experience some discomfort after prolonged wear -- though this is rare if you have no prior foot condition such as plantar fasciitis. (Reason: With accentuation of the heel being lower and greater extension/straightening of the knee, the foot tends to roll more, from "heel-to-ball," a movement that elongates the undersurface of the sole of the foot.)
6. Feel "winded" after walking a moderate to long distance in Earthshoes® regardless of the terrain or your physical condition or fitness level. (Reason: See reason # 4 -- after all you are walking "uphill.")



Some of the positive experiences are:

1. Feel as though you are standing and walking "taller." (Reason: Negative heel technology places your body into a more erect, natural posture, where you will stand and walk more erect, thus the feeling of being taller is experienced.)
2. Experience decreased muscle tension in the small of your back, and in some cases along the entire spine. (Reason: Better posture allows you to combat the tendency of everyday life to "pitch" your body alignment forward, forever making it a battle to keep erect. This counterbalancing act increases muscle tension along the spine as postural muscles are overtaxed. The negative heel concept naturally alleviates this postural tendency.)
3. An ability to ambulate farther or stand longer without low back tension. (Reason: See reason # 2 above.)
4. Experience increased stamina in walking or running after several days of wear. (Reason: The training effect of the negative heel footwear increases the physiologic effect of ambulating -- walking or running -- so as to accelerate the process in gaining muscular endurance and improved cardiovascular fitness.)
5. If you have "tender feet" or heel pain upon awakening in the morning, where it takes several minutes or longer to "warm-up" in order to stand on both feet comfortably, you may experience relief after several weeks of wear. (Reason: Because the wearing of the shoe emulates a barefoot walk in the sand along a beach, the foot naturally stretches with each step, along with a natural spread of your toes. This natural deformation of the foot allows the tough, sinewy tissue on the sole of your foot, to gradually lengthen, thereby easing the traction or pull of this "tight" structure on its attachments.)
6. Be keenly aware of the forward posture that traditional shoes place you in and in effect, make you more conscientious of your posture overall. (Reason: Good, natural posture is healthy. You will be sensitive to any deviations to your natural posture or gait -- mechanics of walking or running.)

