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## 10 Best Shoes for Back Pain of 2024

By [Corey Whelan](#)



Edited by [Marlo Jappen Porto](#)

Updated: July 19, 2024



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Back pain is a problem for many. In fact, Yash Mehta, D.O., a doctor of osteopathic medicine at the Virginia Spine Institute, says that it's one of the most common complaints for doctor visits worldwide. Since footwear can impact our spinal health, it's important to pick wisely. "You want to choose a support shoe with sufficient cushioning, snug fit, and great arch support," says Dr. Mehta.

I'm Corey Whelan, a health writer with more than a decade of experience covering products that help people live healthier and more comfortable lives. My experience with chronic back pain from scoliosis and a pinched nerve motivated me to research this topic. I've come up with a list of shoes for back pain that covers different preferences and needs. All of the pairs I've selected offer superior cushioning and arch support. My top recommendation, the KLAWE 528 walking sneaker, which is approved by the American Podiatric Medical Association (APMA), stands out for its sturdy arch support, deep heel cup, and ample padding.

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## Best Overall

**KLAW 528 »**

**PROS:**

- ✓ Full arch support
- ✓ Thick cushioning reduces impact
- ✓ Deep heel cup for stability
- ✓ Wide toe box
- ✓ Approved by the APMA

**CONS:**

- ✗ Not machine-washable
- ✗ Run large

[Buy From Klaw - Women's](#)[Buy From Klaw - Men's](#)

We chose the KLAW 528 walking sneakers as our best overall pick because they provide significant medial and lateral arch support. (The medial and the lateral are your foot's two longitudinal arches.) The KLAW 528 supports your body's weight as you move and absorbs the shock generated from walking or [running](#).

Personally, I like the support they give my legs and have noticed that my knees and back feel less achy at night, even after trudging loads of laundry.

Additionally, I’m a fan of the stability they give my feet on city pavement.

These highly cushioned shoes have a deep heel cup that prevents abnormal tilting, which helps maintain optimum foot, ankle, knee, and back alignment. “Shoes that don’t provide adequate arch or heel support can lead to poor alignment and balance, which stresses the spine,” explains Gregory Alvarez, DMP, FACFAS, a podiatrist at the Ankle & Foot Centers of America in Fayetteville, GA.

The KLAW 528 has many standout features, including an ultralight midsole, a rainproof leather upper, and an anti-slip tread. They come in regular and wide widths, lots of colors, and both men’s and women’s sizes.

Specs

List Price:	\$148
Sizes:	6-11 (women’s); 8-13 (men’s)
Width:	Regular, wide
Materials:	Leather upper, ethyl vinyl acetate (EVA) midsole, EVA and rubber outsole

[Buy From Klaw - Women's »](#)

Best Budget

New Balance Fresh Foam Arishi V4 »

**PROS:**

- ✓ Affordably priced
- ✓ Foam midsole cushioning
- ✓ Lightweight

**CONS:**

- ✗ Some users say these shoes feel tight across the top of the foot
- ✗ Not meant for long runs

[Buy From New Balance - Women's](#)[Buy From Amazon - Men's](#)

These shoes are one of the pairs that Dr. Mehta recommends for people with back pain. They fit the bill for their cushioning, fit, and arch support.

“An improper degree of any or all of these aspects can impact the stress on our feet, impact our gait, and alter our body mechanics all the way up the legs and pelvis, leading to misalignment of our spine and back pain over time,” he explains.

New Balance’s Fresh Foam Arishi sneakers have a deeply cushioned midsole that provides arch support. They’re also lightweight, which helps reduce pressure on the lower back.

Specs

List Price:	\$69.99
Sizes:	5-12 (women’s); 7-15 (men’s)
Width:	Standard, wide, extra-wide (men’s sizes only)
Materials:	Foam cushioning, mesh and suede upper, rubber outsole

[Buy From New Balance - Women's »](#)

Best for Wide Feet

HOKA Bondi 8 »



PROS:	CONS:
✓ Wide and extra-wide widths available	✗ Pricey
	✗ Might feel heavy

- ✓ Good for both walking and running
- ✓ Rear crash pad absorbs shock and promotes smooth heel-to-toe transitions
- ✓ APMA Seal of Acceptance recipient

[Buy From HOKA - Women's](#)[Buy From HOKA - Men's](#)

If regular-sized shoes pinch the sides or toes of your feet, you may be better off with a wide or extra-wide shoe. In general, feet are considered wide if they measure more than half of your standard foot size in inches. Keep in mind that your shoes should also accommodate sock bulk, especially in colder weather.

The HOKA Bondi 8, which also makes our [Best HOKA Shoes](#) and [Best Walking Shoes](#) lists, comes in regular and wide widths for both men and women, but only extra-wide widths are available for men. Dr. Mehta recommends this shoe for active people, including runners, who experience back pain. These highly-cushioned sneakers are a good choice for both recovery and active days.

One of the things that sets these shoes apart is their shock-absorbing, back-end crash pad. This makes heel-to-toe transitions easier and reduces the transmission of impact up your spine.

They're also highly padded to offer optimal comfort and absorb significant step pounding. All that padding makes these shoes a little heavy, however, so some may find them too bulky.

## Specs

**List Price:**

**\$165**

**Sizes:** 5-12 (women); 7-15 (men's)

**Width:** Regular, wide, extra-wide (men's only)

**Materials:** Mesh, foam, rubber

[Buy From HOKA - Women's »](#)

## Best for Walking

### Ryka Women's Devotion Plus 3 »



#### PROS:

- ✓ Designed for high-performance fitness walking
- ✓ Responsive cushioning provides impact protection and shock absorption

#### CONS:

- ✗ Not meant for running or trail hiking
- ✗ No men's sizes

[Buy From Ryka](#)



- ✓ Eight-sectioned rubber sole provides traction to reduce fall risk
- ✓ Approved by the APMA

I wear the Ryka Devotion Plus 3 sneakers for long urban walks. No stranger to back aches, I deal with chronic back pain from [scoliosis](#) and a pinched nerve. The Ryka’s are highly cushioned and provide snug arch support. This helps me maintain proper spinal alignment without pitching forward or straining my lower back.

If you have back pain, the way your shoes fit is especially important. Ryka sneakers, which are designed specifically for women, have a narrower-than-average heel and a roomy toe box to accommodate women’s unique muscle movements and foot shape.

“Shoes that fit incorrectly and are too tight or too loose can alter walking patterns. This places additional strain on the back,” says Dr. Alvarez. The Rykas help feet maintain their natural position, which, in turn, supports the proper alignment of the back muscles and spine.

### Specs

List Price:	\$59.99
Sizes:	5-11 (women’s)
Width:	Medium, wide
Materials:	EVA foam, rubber outsole, lycra-lined tongue and collar

[Buy From Ryka »](#)

### Best for Running

## Brooks Glycerin 20 »



### PROS:

- ✓ Designed for track and road running
- ✓ Ultra-deep cushioning significantly absorbs pounding
- ✓ APMA Seal of Acceptance recipient

### CONS:

- ✗ Pricey
- ✗ Increased padding may be too squishy for some people

[Buy From Brooks - Women's](#)

[Buy From Brooks - Men's](#)

If your running shoes are old and worn, they're unlikely to withstand the force of pounding footstrikes. According to Dr. Mehta, cushioning is key for alleviating back pain during and after running. "More cushioning leads to more shock absorption and less force transmitted to the body," he explains.

The Glycerin 20 is one of Dr. Mehta’s top choices for back pain sufferers. Compared to earlier models of this shoe, this version contains an additional 2 millimeters of Brooks’ DNA LOFT v3 midsole cushioning. The result is a highly cushioned, soft innersole that enables easy transitions between fast or slow strides.

Specs

List Price:	\$160
Sizes:	5-12 (women’s); 7-15 (men’s)
Width:	Medium, wide, narrow (women’s sizes only)
Materials:	EVA foam, rubber, recycled materials

[Buy From Brooks - Women's »](#)

Best for Plantar Fasciitis

Vionic Uptown Loafer »



**PROS:**

- ✓ Slightly elevated heel
- ✓ Forefront cushioning
- ✓ Arch support
- ✓ Lightweight and flexible
- ✓ Deep heel cup provides stability

**CONS:**

- ✗ No men’s sizes
- ✗ Requires a break in period of one to two weeks

Buy From Vionic

Plantar fasciitis is a painful foot condition that can exacerbate lower back pain. If you have plantar fasciitis, you may need to alter the way you walk to keep pressure off your heels. Shoes that have both a slightly elevated heel and cushioned arch support can help you maintain a natural gait. This protects your hip joints and lower back from excess pressure and twisting.

Vionic’s Uptown Loafer is a lightweight, flexible walking shoe that offers sneaker-like comfort. They’re backed by Heeluxe, a third-party testing company that analyzes and improves the comfort and performance of footwear brands.

These loafers can be completely decompressed for flat, lightweight packing – a perk for travelers. They come in 13 colors and patterns and are available in either suede or leather.

**Specs**

List Price:	\$130
Sizes:	5-13 (women’s)
Width:	Medium, wide
Materials:	Leather or suede upper, synthetic rubber outsole

Buy From Vionic »

## Best Slip-On

### KURU Atom Slip-On »



#### PROS:

- ✓ No-lace design for easy on and off
- ✓ Flexible knit upper
- ✓ Cushioned heel and arch support

#### CONS:

- ✗ No wide widths available
- ✗ Not supportive enough for running

[Buy From KURU](#)

If you have back pain, bending down to tie shoe laces can be a struggle. These slip-ons easily slide onto the foot. In addition to a no-lace design and a large pull tab, the uppers are made from a breathable, flexible knit fabric that gives easily for a sock-like feel.

These shoes have a curved heel cup that provides stability, alleviating back strain. They also have ample cushioning for arch support and shock absorption. Plus, this pair’s roomy toe box won’t pinch your feet or alter your gait.

Specs

List Price:	\$145
Sizes:	6-11 (women’s); 7-13 (men’s)
Width:	Medium
Materials:	Knit upper, rubber outsole

[Buy From KURU »](#)

Best Dress Shoe

VIVAIA Round-Toe Chunky Heels (Julie Pro) »



**PROS:**

- ✓ Thick mid-heel alternative to high-heeled dress shoes
- ✓ Diamond-patterned pressure-relieving inner soles
- ✓ Extra shock absorption padding under the heel
- ✓ Doubled arch support

**CONS:**

- ✗ No wide widths available
- ✗ Herbal innersole has antibacterial properties but may cause allergic reactions

[Buy From Vivaia](#)

Every expert interviewed for this piece said the same thing – nothing is worse for back pain (or your feet) than high heels. “High-heeled shoes with narrow toe boxes force you to alter your gait. They may also cause back pain and increase dysfunction, especially in people with conditions like degenerative disc disease,” says Georgiy Brusovanik, M.D., an orthopedic spine surgeon based in Miami, FL.

Even so, many people are reluctant to give up high heels completely. If that sounds like you, these chunky-heeled shoes may be a good alternative to the painful stilettos you have in your closet. “The lower your heels, the better,” says Dr. Mehta, who also mentions that thick heels help with weight distribution, which takes strain off your back.

This shoe has back-saving features like added arch and heel padding. They also have an anti-slip rubber outsole that may reduce the risk of falls. Available in nine elegant colors and patterns, these heels are dressy enough for the office.

## Specs

**List Price:**

\$139

**Sizes:**

5-11 (women's)

Width:

Regular

Materials:

Artemisia argyi (Chinese mugwort) infused foam inner soles, rubber outsoles

[Buy From Vivaia »](#)

Best for All-Day Comfort

OrthoFeet Nira Hands-Free »



PROS:

- ✓ Comfortable padding for all-day wear
- ✓ Stretchable fabric accommodates foot swelling
- ✓ Removable orthotic insoles are included

CONS:

- ✗ No men’s sizes
- ✗ Not machine-washable

[Buy From OrthoFeet](#)



- ✓ Rubber outsole provides traction
- ✓ Cushioning reduces impact

The Nira Hands-Free sneaker is stretchy and comfortably padded for all-day walking. The ventilated fabric upper ensures that your feet will stay cool and sweat-free during long-term wear.

These sneakers use patented hands-free technology, making them easy to put on and take off. Simply step into them – there’s no need to bend down to tie the laces. This feature is particularly appealing to those with back pain or limited mobility.

Additionally, they’re designed with extra depth to accommodate a variety of medical inserts. The Nira sneakers also come with removable orthotic insoles and fitting spacers, so you’ll have ample room no matter what your foot shape.

The cushioned, ergonomic soles have a mild rocker design that’ll [make walking comfortable](#) for your feet, knees, and back. They also have a wide toe box.

### Specs

List Price:	\$160
Sizes:	5-12 (women’s)
Width:	Medium, wide, extra-wide
Materials:	Antimicrobial fabric, rubber

[Buy From Orthofeet »](#)

## Best for Flat Feet

### HOKA Arahi 7 »



#### PROS:

- ✓ Patented stability shoe designed for flat feet
- ✓ Good for running and walking
- ✓ APMA Seal of Acceptance recipient

#### CONS:

- ✗ Some reviewers say it's heavier on the foot than earlier Arahi models
- ✗ Balanced-level cushioning is less plush than some HOKA models

[Buy From HOKA - Women's](#)

[Buy From HOKA - Men's](#)

Those with flat feet are more likely to overpronate – or roll their feet inward – as they walk or run. This alters the alignment of the entire lower body up through the back and hips. Joint pain and back muscle strain typically result. If you have flat feet, a stability shoe is essential for reducing foot and back pain.

HOKA's Arahi 7 is constructed with J-shaped foam on the medial side of the arch, where the foot tends to roll inwards during movement. This J-frame design keeps the foot stable and supported while preventing ankle rolling.

They're moderately cushioned to absorb shock while running or walking. The Arahi 7 comes in fun, seasonal colors in addition to neutral shades.

## Specs

<b>List Price:</b>	\$145
<b>Sizes:</b>	5-12 (women's); 7-15 (men's)
<b>Width:</b>	Regular, wide
<b>Materials:</b>	Mesh fabric, foam, rubber

[Buy From HOKA - Women's »](#)

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## The Bottom Line

The best shoes for back pain provide ample arch support, as well as cushioning that reduces impact during activities like walking, running, or jumping. We chose the KLAWE 528 as our best overall pick because it offers exceptional arch support and lots of cushioning at the heel and forefoot to absorb shock. Notably, the APMA granted these shoes a Seal of Acceptance for promoting good foot health.

## Things To Consider When Buying Shoes for Back Pain

**Comfort and Fit:** Improper-fitting shoes can alter the way you walk. This can place additional strain on the back. A comfortable fit helps stabilize the feet and, by extension, the back.

The experts we spoke to say that back pain sufferers should avoid completely flat shoes like flip-flops, as well as high-heels and shoes with narrower toe boxes. Flip-flops typically don't provide enough arch support, which negatively impacts spinal alignment. According to Dr. Alvarez, high-heeled shoes elevate the body's center of gravity, causing the lower back to arch more than usual to maintain balance. Ultimately, he says, this leads to back strain.

**Arch Support and Cushioning:** Adequate arch support should be an important consideration for any shoe you wear, especially if you're active or [on your feet for many hours a day](#). If you have back pain, look for a shoe that snugly cradles the arch with flexible cushioning.

Dr. Mehta says that cushioning is key when it comes to back pain. He explains, "More cushioning leads to more shock absorption, and less force transmitted to the rest of the body." Ample cushioning also promotes a natural walking gait, which helps keep your spine in proper alignment.

**Durability:** Flimsy, unsupportive shoes that wear down quickly can lead to poor alignment and balance, putting strain on the spine. Even high-quality shoes wear out over time. It's recommended to replace your shoes every 8 to 12 months or once they start showing signs of wear and tear.

## How We Chose the Best Shoes for Back Pain

We chose models from top brands that are engineered for safety, comfort, and foot stability.

We spoke with [Georgiy Brusovanik, M.D.](#), a spine surgeon at Spine Doctor Miami for his input on shoe qualities that impact back health. We also spoke to osteopathic physician, [Dr. Yash Mehta, D.O.](#) of Interventional Spine and Sports Medicine, and [Dr. Gregory Alvarez, DPM, FACFAS](#), a podiatrist at the Ankle & Foot Centers of America, for additional input on the types of shoes people with back pain should look for.

## WHY SHOULD YOU TRUST US?

[Corey Whelan](#), the author of this piece, has more than a decade of experience researching, editing, and writing about health-related products. Her personal experience helped inform this article, as she has chronic back pain from scoliosis and a pinched nerve. A contributor to U.S. News 360 Reviews, Whelan has covered a range of relevant topics, including the [best walking shoes for men](#), [recovery slides](#), and [heating pads](#). Her bylines can also be found in Verywell Health, Healthline, and Well+Good. This piece was edited by [Marlo Jappen Porto](#), an editor at 360 Reviews who covers fitness and sleep.

## FAQ

**How do shoes impact back pain?**

+

**What type of shoes are best for people with back pain?**

+

**What type of shoes should people with back pain avoid?**

+

**What are orthotics?**

+

**What else can you do to help back pain?**

+

## About Our Team



### Corey Whelan

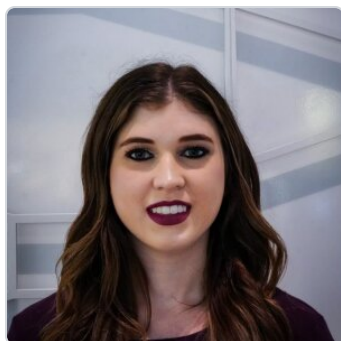
Contributor



Corey Whelan is a patient advocate, freelance health writer, and small business owner based in Brooklyn, New York. She specializes in reviewing consumer products that make people

healthier, happier, and safer. Whelan contributes content to a wide range of sites including Verywell Health, Healthline, and Well+Good.

[Read more](#)



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Former Editor



Marlo Jappen Porto is a former editor for U.S. News 360 Reviews, focusing on home goods. Prior to joining the team, she was a researcher at NBCUniversal, where she gathered compelling and relevant archival content for live broadcasts. In addition, she has spent years working as an editor and community journalist.

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