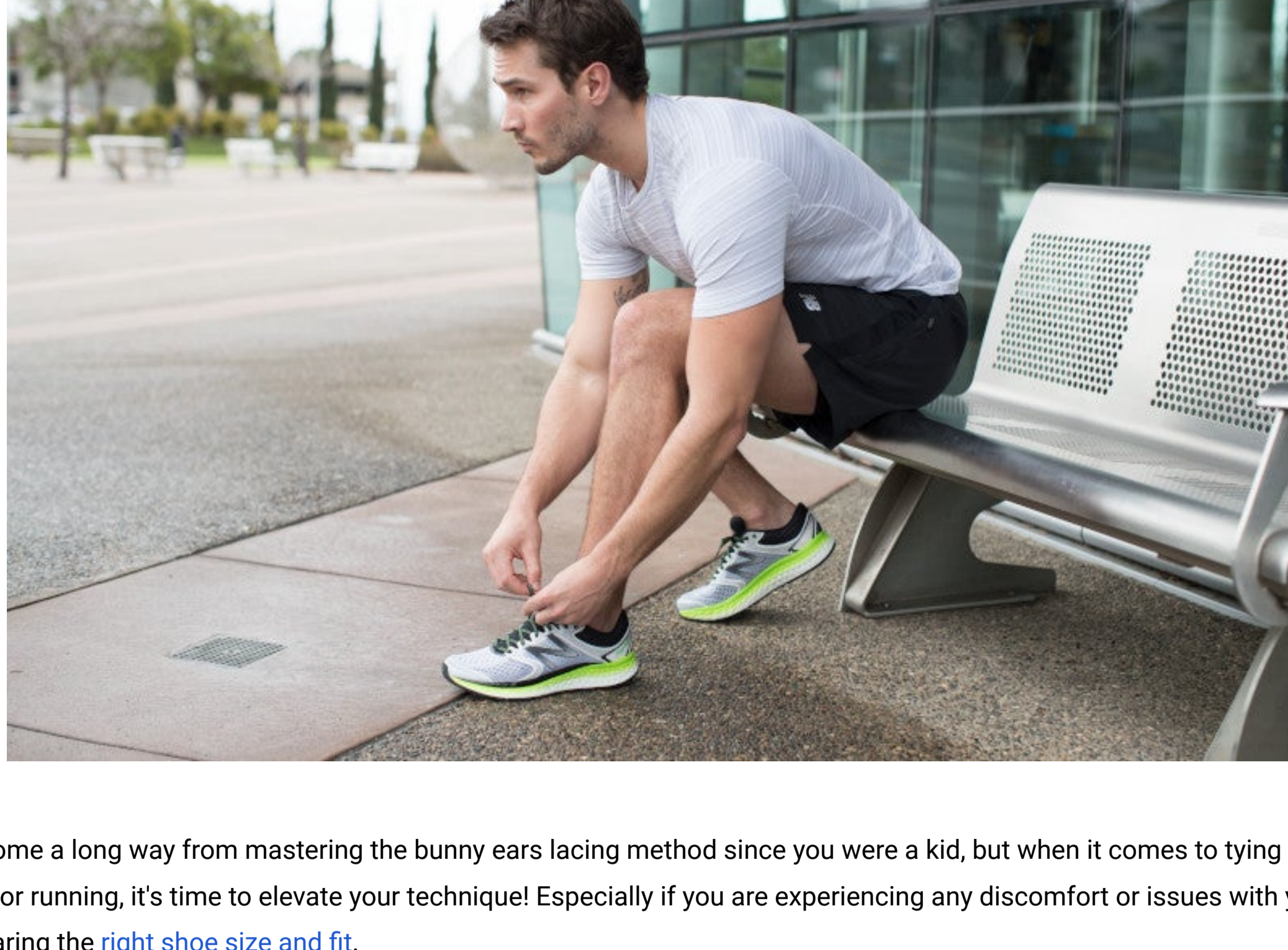


How to Lace Running Shoes for Your Best Fit and Improved Comfort

Updated: August 14, 2023



You have come a long way from mastering the bunny ears lacing method since you were a kid, but when it comes to tying your shoelaces for running, it's time to elevate your technique! Especially if you are experiencing any discomfort or issues with your feet despite wearing the [right shoe size and fit](#).

The standard criss-cross lacing straight out of the box may work for some, but as runners, we have all fallen victim to heel slippage, blisters, hot spots, or a bruised toenail or two. Did you know that different shoe-lacing techniques can help resolve these issues? From runner's loop and parallel lacing, to bruised toe and hot spot lacing styles, check out our step-by-step guide with our tips and tricks on how to optimize your comfort and fit with the shoes you already have.

The Runner's Loop

A telltale sign that your heel is moving around too much is excessive wear inside the back of your shoe. If you feel your heel is slipping out of your shoe when running, try the runner's loop lacing method for a secure hold. As one of the most popular lacing techniques, the runner's loop, also known as the "heel lock," helps avoid blisters by preventing your foot from sliding forward as you run. The loops on the laces tighten the heel collar to limit excess movement and keep the heel locked in so you're ready to hit the ground running.



How to Tie: Runner's Loop

- Step 1. Lace the shoe normally until the next-to-last eyelets on either side.
- Step 2. Draw the laces backward through the last eyelet to create loops on the outside of the shoe.
- Step 3. Cross each lace back across the tongue and through the opposite loop.

Parallel Lacing

While running shoes should have a snug fit, they should also have some give. If your shoe feels too tight, try this parallel "ladder" lacing style for easing tension. Threading the laces in a straight, horizontal bar pattern helps minimize the pressure on top of your foot while offering a secure hold so you feel more comfortable. The parallel lacing method is also beneficial for those with high insteps or higher arches in providing better support and more breathing room.



How to Tie: Parallel Lacing Technique

- Step 1. Completely remove the lace from the shoe.
- Step 2. Lace the first two eyelets by your big toe.
- Step 3. Pull the lace from the first eyelet straight across the tongue to the parallel eyelet.
- Step 4. Once through this eyelet, bring the lace up the shoe, skipping one eyelet.
- Step 5. Repeat these steps until the laces reach the top of the tongue.

Bruised Toe Lacing

If you have a bruised toe or your big toenail turned black, you can take some pressure off the toe with this lacing trick. The diagonal lacing can help open up some space for the toe box, preventing your feet from sliding and giving you some wiggle room.

Bruised toes can also occur from your shoes being too short, in which case you need a properly fitted running shoe that comfortably covers the length of your feet with sufficient room for toe splaying.



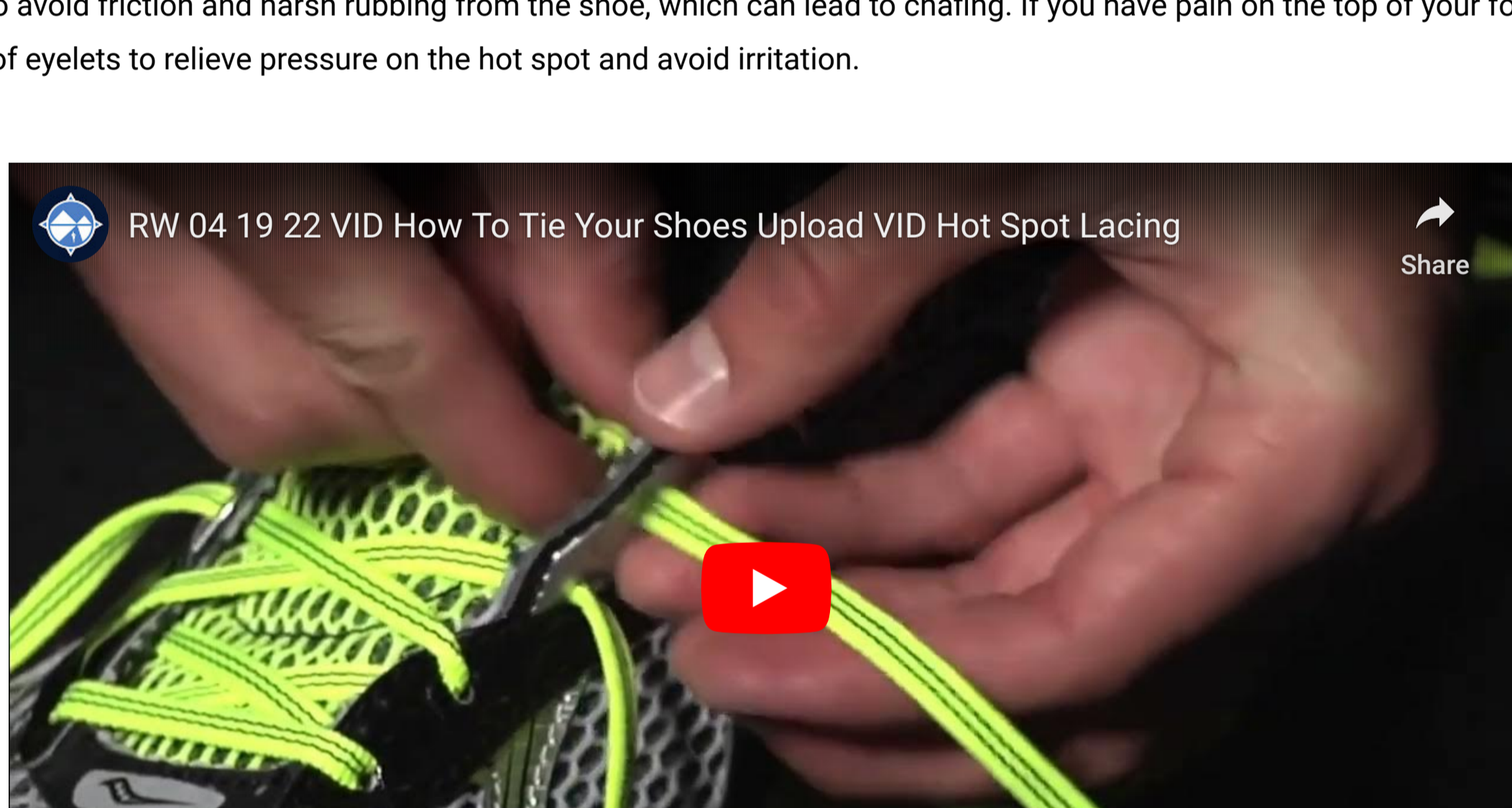
How to Tie: Bruised Toe Lacing Technique

- Step 1. Completely remove the lace from the shoe.
- Step 2. Thread one end of the lace from the eyelet nearest your big toe diagonally up to the top eyelet. Leave enough lace so the shoe can be tied.
- Step 3. Thread the other end of the lace across to the opposite eyelet and then back and forth toward the top of the shoe.

Note: If you have problems with any of your other toes, you can thread the laces in reverse order to relieve pressure.

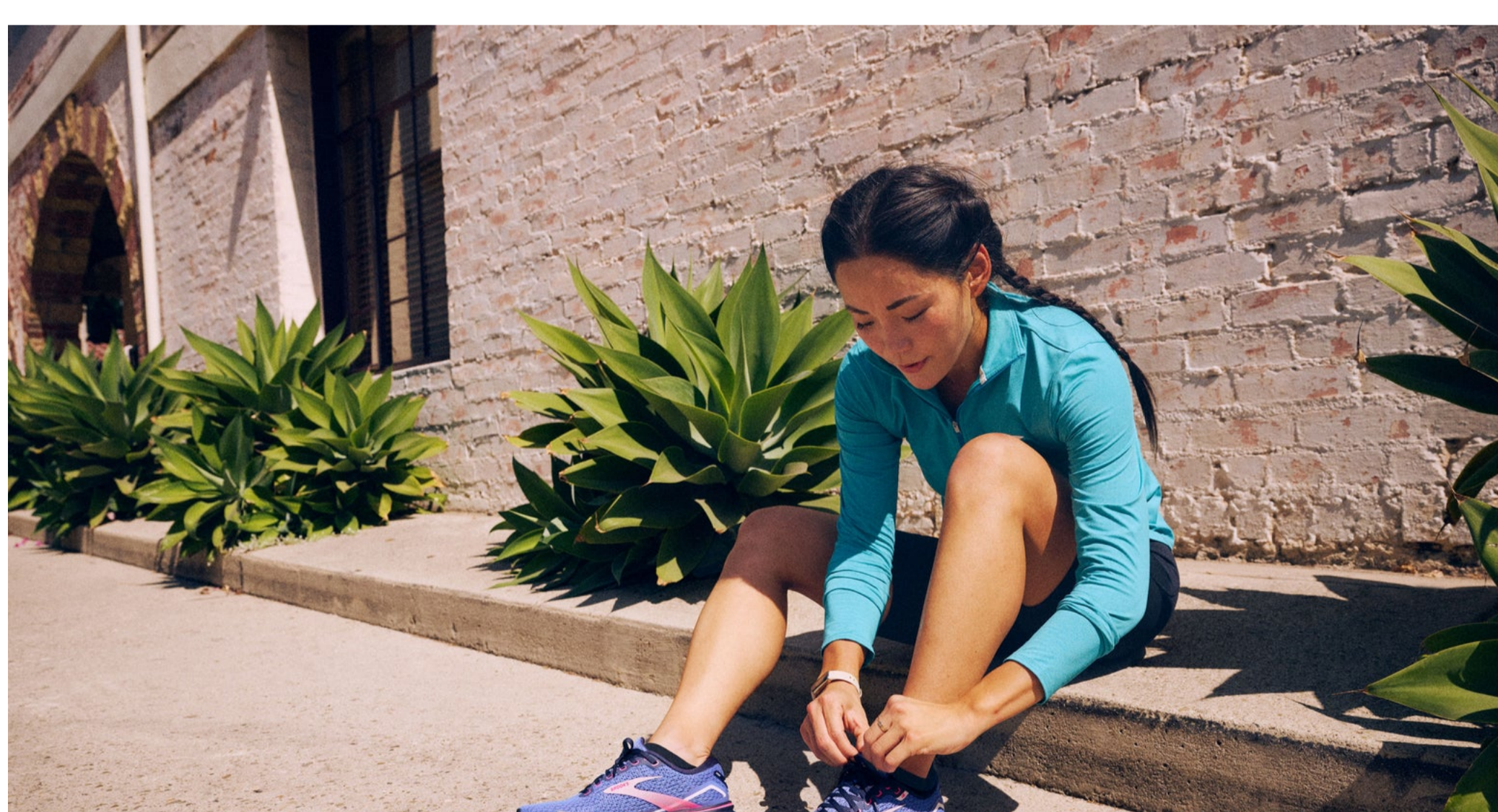
Hot Spot Lacing

In addition to wearing running shoes with breathable mesh uppers, the hot spot lacing technique helps alleviate pressure points on your foot to avoid friction and harsh rubbing from the shoe, which can lead to chafing. If you have pain on the top of your foot, you can skip a set of eyelets to relieve pressure on the hot spot and avoid irritation.



How to Tie: Hot Spot Lacing Technique

- Step 1. Start by unlacing the shoe to below the spot where you're feeling the irritation.
- Step 2. Instead of lacing diagonally over the hot spot, bring the lace directly up the shoe on both sides for as long as it takes to avoid the hot spot.
- Step 3. Continue the diagonal lace pattern until you reach the top of the shoe.

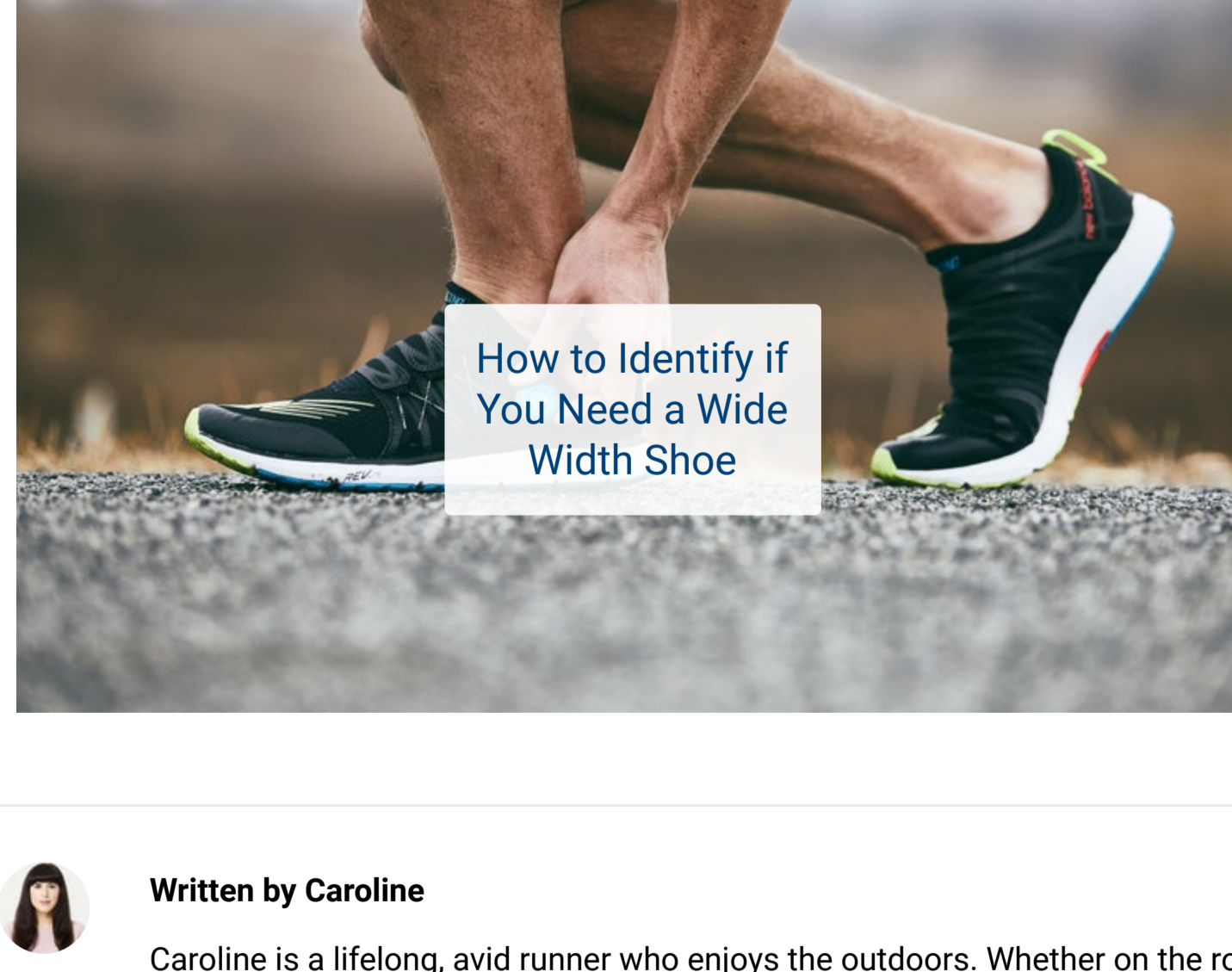


Tips for a Comfortable Run

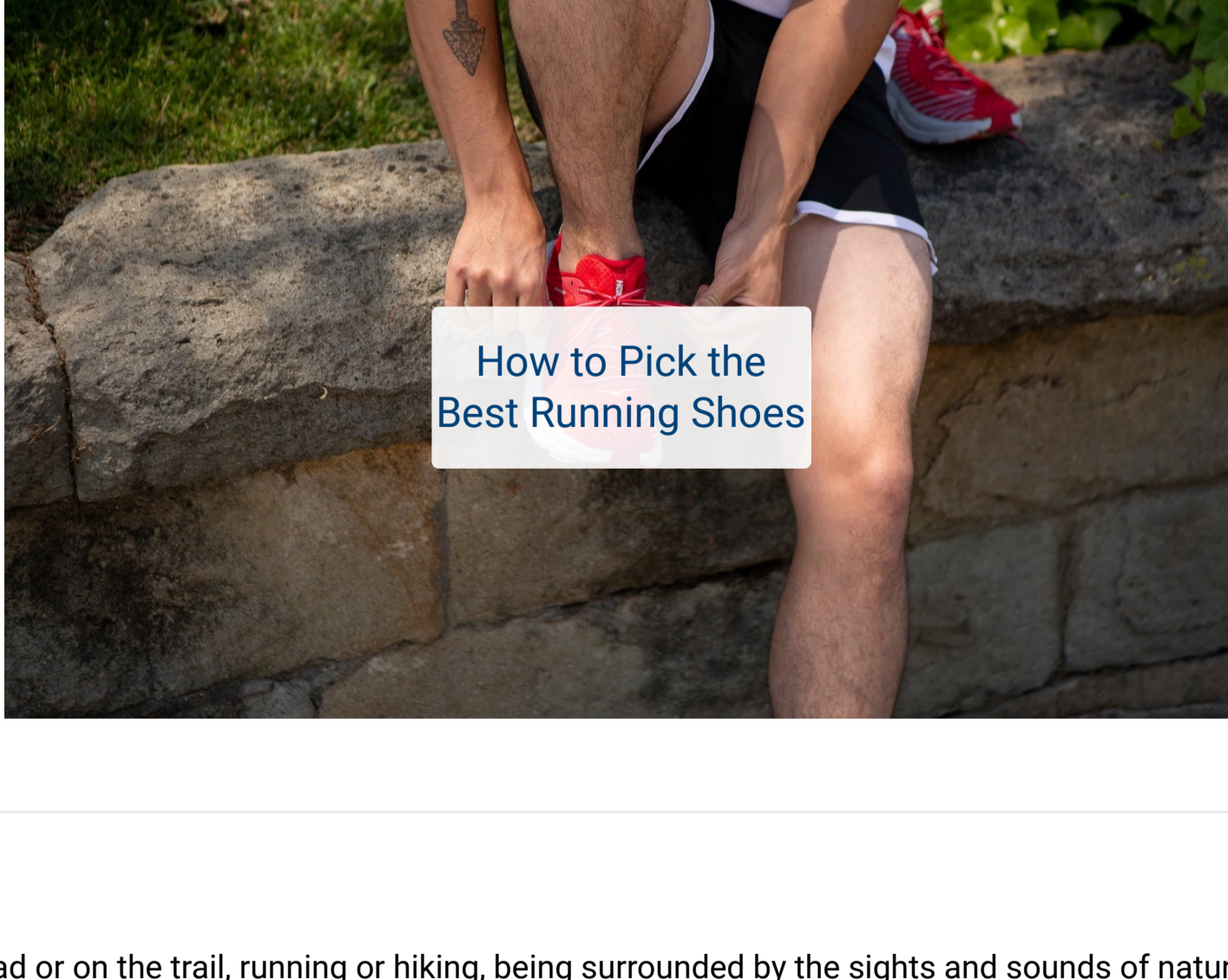
Like the perfect bow on a beautifully wrapped present, lacing adds the finishing touch to your running toolkit. Properly lacing your running shoes helps avoid discomfort and can improve your performance. Additionally, different lacing patterns can help change the tension and fit of the upper of the shoe, offering support where you need it most. Ultimately, the best lacing method is unique to your foot type. Here are some other quick tips to aid in a comfortable run:

- Start with the appropriate running shoes and length, ensuring you have the [right size and fit](#) (whether you have narrow, standard, or wide feet).
- Avoid over-tightening your laces, which can stop blood flow and lead to injuries, instep inflammation, tendonitis, and other serious issues.
- Adjust your laces mid-run on longer distances and extended runs, as your laces naturally stretch and loosen over time.
- Periodically replace worn-out [laces](#).
- Focus on lacing to relieve pressure points.
- Tie double knots to prevent laces from coming undone when running.
- Always untie laces before wearing or removing your shoes to avoid worn-out heel counters.

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Written by Caroline

Caroline is a lifelong, avid runner who enjoys the outdoors. Whether on the road or on the trail, running or hiking, being surrounded by the sights and sounds of nature is her ultimate happy place.

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