

12-Week Transition Plan with your Ōdoo Sandals

By Amol Sharma, Ōdoo Sandals

This is a 12-week plan to transition to running with your Ōdoos. It involves gradually increasing the time spent wearing them, strengthening foot & lower leg muscles, and improving running form, with a focus on minimizing impact. This approach helps the feet adapt to the new sandals, and to a slightly different way of running, that reduces the risk of injury.

Here's a detailed 12-week transition plan:

Weeks 1-2: Activate dormant muscles and build a foundation

- **Walking:** Start with short walks for 10-15 minutes every day in your Ōdoos on soft surfaces, gradually increasing the duration over the two weeks.
- **Foot Exercises:** Perform exercises to strengthen, and stretch your feet. Refer below for details.
- **Mix Footwear:** Alternate between your Ōdoos and regular shoes during the initial weeks.

Weeks 3-4: Increasing Activity

- **Walking:** Gradually increase walking time, optionally including short runs of 2-5 minutes on soft surfaces (grass, sand or mud).
- **Daily Activities:** Begin incorporating your Ōdoos into daily activities like going shopping etc.
- **Foot Exercises:** Continue with foot strengthening exercises.

Weeks 5-8: Integrating Ōdoos into Daily Routine

- **Walking/Running:** Increase walking and running durations, focusing on proper form (midfoot strike, shorter strides, higher cadence). Follow the 10% rule.
- **Add Variety Of Surfaces:** Gradually start longer walks on other surfaces like gravel, tar or concrete, but avoid excessive impact initially.
- **Keep Mixing Footwear:** Wear your Ōdoos more frequently throughout the day, but still alternate with regular shoes for long runs/ prolonged use.

Weeks 9-12: Continued Adaptation

- **Walking/Running:** Continue building endurance and distance, focusing on natural gait and soft landings.
- **Foot Exercises:** Integrate advanced foot & lower leg exercises as needed.
- **Footwear:** Wear your Ōdoos more consistently, but listen to your body and adjust as needed.

Important Considerations:

- **Listen to your body:** Pay attention to any pain or discomfort and adjust the plan accordingly.
- **Patience is key:** Gradual progression is absolutely essential to avoid injury. Follow the 10% mileage increment per week rule.
- **Proper form is crucial:** Focus on landing on your midfoot or forefoot with a soft step, shorter strides, higher cadence than what you are used to while running in regular cushioned shoes

- **Build lower body strength:** Feet are part of your lower body, and work best & remain injury free when properly supported by all other leg muscles.
- **Massaging helps:** Use a tennis ball or a foam roller to massage and release tension in the sole of the foot and calf muscles.
- **Consult the professionals:** If you have any concerns or pre-existing conditions, consult a healthcare professional or podiatrist.
- **Enjoy the process:** Transitioning to minimalist sandals is a beautiful journey that can improve foot health, heighten overall senses and long-term movement goals.

Exercises

Exercises for high arches aim to improve flexibility, strength, and balance in the foot and ankle. These exercises can help alleviate pain and discomfort associated with high arches, such as plantar fasciitis and ankle instability. A combination of stretching, strengthening, and balance exercises is recommended.

Do these exercises every day, in combination (stretching, strengthening & balance), 1-3 times a day. Start with 1 exercise from each category, and increase the repetitions, sets & number of exercises gradually.

Stretching Exercises:

- **Towel Stretch:** Sit with legs extended, loop a towel around the balls of your feet, and gently pull the towel to stretch your foot and arch.
- **Toe Curls:** Place a towel on the floor and use your toes to scrunch it up towards you.

- **Calf Stretches:** Stand with one foot slightly in front of the other, and lean forward, feeling the stretch in your calf and heel.
- **Ankle Inversions and Eversions:** Move your ankle inward (inversion) and outward (eversion) to improve mobility and stability.
- **Heel Raises:** Stand with feet hip-width apart and raise up onto your toes, then lower your heels back down.
- **Stair Heel Raises:** Place your toes on a step and let your heels hang off the edge, then raise your heels as high as possible.

Strengthening Exercises:

- **Arch Lifts:** Stand with feet flat on the ground and lift the arches of your feet without lifting your toes.
- **Toe Taps:** Sit with feet flat on the floor and tap your toes up and down.
- **Short Foot Exercise:** Contract your arch muscles, pulling the forefoot slightly towards the heel, as if shortening the foot.
- **Toe Squeezes:** While seated, squeeze your toes together for a few seconds, then relax.
- **Ankle Weights:** Use ankle weights to add resistance to ankle exercises, or while walking and climbing stairs, to enhance strength and stability.

Balance Exercises:

- **Vrikshasana:** Do Vrikshasana or other yoga poses to improve balance and proprioception.

Alternatively, you may simply stand on one foot, holding for as long as comfortable.

- Bosu Ball or Wobble Board: Stand on a wobble board or boss ball to challenge your balance and coordination.

Lower Leg Exercises

Ease into compound movements after 4 weeks of foot muscle activation. These can be body weight or weighted as per your comfort and strength level.

- Squats
- Deadlifts
- Calf Raises
- Lunges
- Step Ups
- Bulgarian Split Squats