



# The naked revolution...

## We meet the man running 'au naturale' in Monday's Cork City Marathon

It seems your mother doesn't always know best: 'Put on your shoes, you'll catch a chill' is an old favourite of mams the world over, but researchers at Harvard say that barefoot could actually be better: provided that you're on the right surface or, even better, you have 'barefoot' protection.

The Harvard study, on foot strikes in runners, indicated that people who ran long distances 'barefoot' were less prone to injury than those in high performance running shoes. If taking to the roads in your socks doesn't appeal to you, Owen Loughrey, MD of Barefoot.ie just might have the solution.

Voted one of the best inventions in 2007 by Time Magazine, Vibram FiveFingers® footwear allows you to experience the benefits of running and walking au naturale - at least from the ankle down. Now available in Cork, Vibram FiveFingers footwear employs unique

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technology that allows you to experience the physiological benefits of going barefoot with the protection of a thin, highly flexible Vibram sole.

Owen began wearing Vibram FiveFingers after reading about the biomechanical benefits of going barefoot and quickly discovered that the unique shoes cured the severe shin splints he suffered when running distances. He decided to share the 'cure' by retailing the shoes online. "Vibram FiveFingers shoes are causing a fundamental shift in running and sports related activities," he told the *Cork News*. "Our bodies are naturally perfect in design, and not flawed: Vibram FiveFingers shoes allow our feet to take back full functional control when hiking, running, weight training, fitness, kayaking, sailing, yoga, or just simply living."

Owen will be taking part in this year's Cork City marathon this Monday, June 7th, wearing Vibram

Fivefingers to prove that running barefoot is best. "Traditional running shoes actually weaken foot and leg muscles, leaving them underdeveloped and more prone to injury," says Owen. "Cushioned heels allow people to lengthen their strides, landing heel-first and forcing the shoe and lower limbs to absorb the impact of each footfall. Running barefoot causes you to naturally shorten your stride, landing first on the outside middle or ball of your foot. As you advance your foot rolls inward; the arch flattens and helps absorb the impact; it then springs back up as you lift your foot and push off the ground, letting you do what your body was designed to do - run barefoot."

Vibram FiveFingers® footwear (from €89 to €149) is available from John Buckley Sports, Camden Quay, Mather's Running Loft, North Main St. and The Edge Sports Shop, North Main St., Cork. For more details, visit [Barefoot.ie](http://Barefoot.ie).



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