

Huaraches can be the ultimate minimalist footwear. If you use a sole that's thin enough, flexible enough, and strong enough, you can get the benefits of being barefoot, plus a layer of protection that can get you through some tricky terrain without a worry. Plus, they look cool!

The traditional tying style used by the Tarahumara looks a bit like you're going to a toga party – not saying that's a bad thing, but it may not be your thing. Also, that style requires you to lace up your sandals every time you put them on. And some people find that you need to lace the sandals tightly to get a secure fit.

Here's a stylish and functional solution for you: A tying style that lets you slip your sandals on and off in under a second, and is secure enough to get you through a marathon (or longer!).

It may take you a bit of experimenting to find the “sweet spot,” where the tension feels just right, but once you do, you may never re-tie your sandals... ever. I've got a pair that haven't been retied in over 3 years!

Setup – Basic Huarache Tying Pattern

Most huarache tying styles start with a “basic pattern” and that's where we begin... If you're not sure about what materials to use, or where to punch the various holes (toe hole and ankle holes), check out www.XeroShoes.com/howto.

For this tying style, you'll need about 4-6' of a non-stretch lace depending on the size of your foot. In many of the pictures that follow, I've removed the extra lace to make it easier to see the lacing technique. If you have a hard time finding one, they're available at www.XeroShoes.com/store/

In these instructions, I'm using a Boulder Sky colored Xero Shoes sole made of FeelTrue™ rubber. These come with the pre-punched, reinforced ankle holes; you just put the toe hole where it belongs for your unique foot shape.

1) The toe knot – different huaraches have different ways of securing the lace under the sole (it's between your toes and flattens out; you don't feel it). This is a Figure-8 knot that's been heated to seal the lace, and then pressed flat with a pliers.

(there are instructions for making a Figure-8 knot on our website)



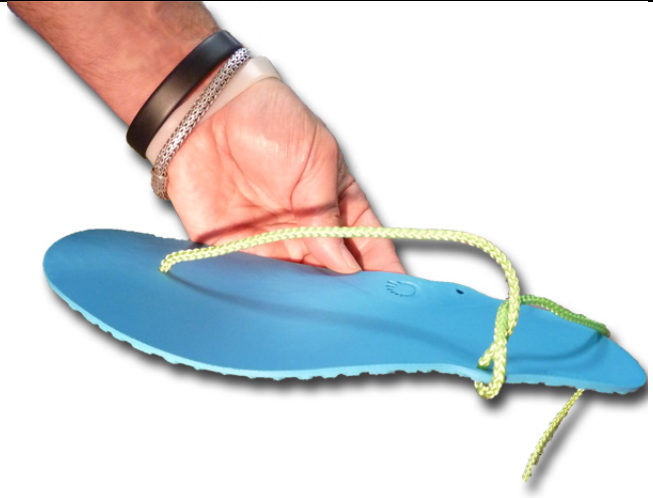
2) Thread the lace down through the OUTSIDE ankle hole. You've now created the "Toe Strap."



3) Bring the lace around the Toe Strap, from the front, toward the back.



3a) Here's another view of this.



4) Thread the lace down through the inside ankle hole (you have now made the "Heel Strap")



5) Bring the lace around the Heel Strap, from the back to the front.



This is the basic huarache tying pattern... Now, let's tie them in a "slip-on" style.



Slip-on Huarache Tying Style #1 (yes there are others, but this is our favorite)

1) Place your foot in on the sole, with the toe strap between your 1st & 2nd toes and the heel strap around, you guessed it, your heel ;-). Here are 2 angles so you see how this looks.



2) Adjust the tension of the toe strap so it's "finger tight". You may find that you like your toe strap tighter (a straighter line between the toe hole and outside ankle hole), or looser... but start here. Also adjust the tension of the heel strap so that it's snug, but not so tight that it moves your foot forward on the sole. If the heel strap is too loose, your heel may slide left/right when you run.



3) In this next section, we'll be tying a "Double Half Hitch." You don't need to know that, but some people will find that interesting. Here's how: Wrap the lace around over the top of the toe strap. Put the "extra" lace toward the front of your foot (Note: Remember that in many of these pictures, I've removed most of the "extra" lace so you can better see how to do the tying itself.). You've now created the "Inside Ankle Strap". Adjust the tension of the Inside Ankle strap... you want the lace to feel secure, but not unpleasantly tight in 3 areas: The toe strap (between the toe hole and the knot you're making), the outside ankle strap (between the knot and the outside ankle hole), and the inside ankle strap).



4) Bring the lace back over the Inside Ankle Strap



5) Thread the lace under what is now becoming the "Outside Ankle Strap" (the section between the knot we're tying in the Toe Strap and the Outside Ankle Hole). Note the loop that you've created with the lace, nearer your ankle.



6) Bring the lace back through that loop I just mentioned.



7) Tighten the knot. You may want to adjust the tension of the various sections of the lace.



7a) Here's that same picture, but with the entire lace visible. You have a lot to play with.



If you want to be ULTRA minimalist, you can just trim off the extra lace and you're done! When you want to take off the huarache, just slide the heel strap down off your heel. When you want to put it on, put your foot all the way in, then pull the strap over your heel. It may feel a tiny bit tight as you go around the heel, but then it'll "lock in" around the Achilles tendon.

Many people, though, find that doubling up the lace is a bit more comfortable and secure. So, let's continue...

8) Thread the lace under the heel strap by the inside of your ankle. You now have 2 Inside Ankle Straps.



9) Thread the lace under the bottom of the two inside ankle straps.



10) Pull the lace all the way to “lock it” around the inside ankle hole.



11) Bring the lace around your heel, above the existing heel strap.



12) Thread the lace under the outside ankle strap



13) Pull the lace all the way through until you have doubled up the heel strap, then thread the lace up under the bottom of the 2 heel straps.



14) Pull the lace all the way through to "lock" it around the outside ankle hole.



15) The last step is locking the lace in the top knot, the double half hitch. But you can't do this with your foot in the shoe. Remove your foot from the huarache by pulling the heel straps down over your heel. Then loosen the double half hitch.



16) Thread the lace through the "hole" you've created, essentially doubling up the outside ankle strap.



17) Pull the lace all the way through, and then tighten the knot.



That's it!

If you like, just cut off the extra lace... or...

Now some people like to get decorative with the extra lace. This not only adds some style, but it keeps the extra lace on your foot... if something ever breaks, you've got the "spare tire" right with your foot!

Here are a few ideas of what you can do.

You can wrap the extra around the outside ankle strap.



You can make more double half hitches down the toe strap.



You can go "half-toga" and wrap the extra around your ankle (obviously, this changes the slip-on nature of this tying style).



Or you can trim off most of extra and then tie a little knot around the toe strap.



To slide off your sandal, just pull the heel straps down over your heel.

To slide on your sandal, hold the knot with one hand, slide your foot all the way forward, then pull the heel straps over your heel. Again, it might be a bit snug as you go over your heel, but then loosen up and lock in place when the heel straps are in position over your Achilles.

In just a short time, you'll see that you can slide your huaraches on and off in under a second!

If you use a lace like the ones we do, the lace itself won't stretch, but the knots may "settle" over your first few days of using this style.

If you need to re-tie it, it's simple. If something merely feels a bit too snug, just tug on that section a bit. If something's a bit too loose, tighten it, and work your way around the lacing pattern to get rid of any slack.

Enjoy!