



RUNNING AHEAD IN 2014

Innovation in shoe technology is leading to some of the most radical designs yet. **Toni Krasicki** provides a guide.

With the rapid advancement of innovative construction techniques, new materials and designs, shoes are evolving faster by the year – and diverging radically between brands. In 2014 you'll find shoes with soles made from plastic blades that propel you forward with each step, and ones with ultra-lightweight uppers knitted with just a single string of fibre. Others have supportive foam midsoles and all manner of hi-tech lightweight materials, which they promise will make you faster. In this guide, we've picked the hero shoe for each key category of athletic footwear.

RUNNING SHOES

Built for forward motion and less sideways stability, running shoes offer flexibility in the toe area and have an emphasis on thicker heels and midsole to help decrease shock absorption during impact. The curved soles, including the front tip of the shoe and distinct tread help send you in the right direction.

① Adidas Springblade

This shoe will have heads turning as you run (or bounce) past. Adidas considers the Springblade its most important shoe in years. It's definitely the most radical, incorporating a unique outsole featuring 16 individually tuned blades that collapse under pressure and then expand upon release. Angled to absorb shock and provide a natural landing, they're meant to help propel you forward with every stride. We were sceptical when we first tried them, but definitely felt the energy push back from



the soles. The outsole and its "springblades" are made of an extremely durable plastic to ensure they don't lose their spring. A heel striker would be the biggest beneficiary of this style of shoe since a heel strike will engage all the blades, while the longer blades under the heel provide the required cushioning as well. In other words, these are great shoes for average or casual runners who don't have more technical mid or forefoot foot strikes. Adidas has really made the Springblades so Mr and Ms Casual Runner can run with more comfort and, maybe, a touch less effort.
adidas.com.au
RRP: \$220



② Under Armour Speedform Apollo

Under Armour is trying to give its shoes the same kind of feel as its performance wear, by pushing the innovation angle of the brand, putting a big emphasis on style and using construction techniques from the sportswear side. Its innovative SpeedForm Apollo is first shoe to have a moulded seamless heel cup. With no innersole or seams within the shoe itself and strategically placed abrasion rubber in high wear areas for durability and traction, these running shoes are basically designed to go fast. The shoe's external silicone grip offers a locked-in, anatomical fit, and the light, flexible and advanced form fitting material makes the shoe feel very light. Feet are kept dry by the moisture wicking cushioned sock liner, and comfort is guaranteed by the molded foam footbed.
underarmour.com
RRP: \$171.88



RACING FLATS

A lighter and lower profile running shoe that falls between a standard running and a minimalist shoe. Racing flats are designed for extra speed during shorter, high intensity sessions and are preferable for 5 to 10k distances.

③ Saucony Type A6

We featured the Saucony Type A6 in last issue's triathlon gear feature. It's back because everything about it points to one thing: It's made to go fast, and is a favourite of runners and triathletes. The upper is made from a new super-lightweight material that keeps the shoe sleek while maintaining support. The seamless configuration with additional padding on the ankle collar also makes for a comfortable friction-free run, even without socks. The sturdy carbon rubber outsole has exceptional traction for off-road racing.
saucony.com.au
RRP: \$159.95

MINIMALIST SHOES

Feet in minimalist shoes are virtually barefoot and as close to the ground as possible, with soles less than 7mm thick. The zero-drop from heel to toe means absolutely no heel elevation and in the absence of cushioning you get plenty of unaltered proprioception to help with your balance and body awareness.

① VIVOBAREFOOT ONE

Barefoot technology is not for everyone, but if you want to go that way than you can't go past the ONE by Vivobarefoot, a great all-rounder with an insanely thin, puncture and slip-resistant 3mm sole, which is as barefoot as you can be without actually being barefoot. The spacious toe-box allows the toes to splay naturally as you move and the shoes are so lightweight you're virtually unaware of their presence. The moisture-wicking lining and lycra collar provides good comfort and the breathable mesh upper has no-sew overlays for seamless lateral support. A good-looker. And no, not all barefoot shoes have those weird separated toes. vivobarefoot.com/au
RRP: \$189.95

CROSS-TRAINERS

Good all-rounders for gym-goers, cross-training shoes are designed for a wide variety of activities. They tend to have a flexible forefoot for agility, added support on the sides for lateral movements and extra cushioning for shock absorption.

② Reebok ZQuick TR

Funky, lightweight cross-trainers that deliver excellent comfort and support while you're accelerating or suddenly changing directions in a workout. We tried them in a session at our local Fitness First club and absolutely loved them. Most noticeable were the horizontal and vertical flex grooves underfoot, which allow the midsole to flex and expand, mapping true to the foot's anatomy. In turn this provides a strong, flexible platform for rapid acceleration and changes of direction. The upper, made from Reebok's "NanoWeb" synthetic mesh overlay, adds support, structure and protection without compromising weight. The medial and lateral midsole cradle keeps the foot stable while allowing for quick lateral movements and also looks kind of cool. shop.reebok.com.au
RRP: \$149.99

WEIGHTLIFTING SHOES

A solid choice if you plan to practice mostly Olympic-style lifts as the shoes have a raised heel that makes it easier to squat into a deeper position through increased ankle range of motion. More stable than other training shoes.

③ Inov-8 Fastlift 335 (men's) and 315 (women's)

The Fastlift shoes are lightweight and look hip enough to be seen in at the gym. With a 16.5mm heel lift, they make squatting with good form easy. The key component is Inov-8's "Power-Truss" wedge that's made up of a series of hollow



sturdy rubber columns precisely positioned through the heel section. The wedge is strong enough to handle over 500 kgs of stable load ensuring your feet remain firmly fixed beneath you. And thanks to a sticky rubber used in the sole and suction cups in the heel, your feet have an iron grip on wood, rubber or concrete platforms.

inov8australia.com.au
RRP: \$189

TRAIL RUNNING SHOES

There are two things that trail running shoes need to do: provide grip on rugged terrain and protect feet. Outsoles tend to have deeper lugs and a more aggressive tread pattern, a stiffer sole, and features like protective toe counters help prevent toe injuries and bruising from rocks.

④ Nike ZOOM tera Wildhorse

Designed to fit like a track shoe but with the features of a topnotch trail shoe, the Wildhorse is lightweight and fits more like a sock. It's virtually seamless compared to a more traditional, clunkier trail shoe. Perfect for tough runs that require more traction such as Alpine trails, the angled lugs, especially below the toe, are what you need to tackle steep hills, and the reverse-oriented lugs down the middle of the heel gives excellent traction on the way down. nikestore.com.au
RRP: \$170



20% OFF REEBOK ZQUICK

Reebok ZQuick, inspired by the design of high-performance ZRated tires found on exotic high-end sports cars, is the latest footwear innovation from Reebok.

CTA: 20% off Reebok Zquick TR shoes at Rebel Sport
T&C: Show your Fitness First membership card at any Rebel store between 7th April - 30th June 2014 to receive 20% off Reebok ZQuick TR



Top 5 tips how to pick the right shoes

- 1 Match your sporting activity to the shoe. If you do the same activity three or more times a week then you need a sport-specific shoe. But if you spend more time in a gym with minimal running, get a cross-trainer.
- 2 The shoes should be comfortable as soon as you put them on, there's no such thing as a "break in period", and your heel should firmly grip the shoe with enough room to wiggle your toes.
- 3 Decide on your goals. Are you running for fitness or for a place on the podium? Are you after a mid-range or high performance shoe?
- 4 Find out what type of feet you have. Whether high arch, flat feet (low arch), pronate, supinate or neutral, this will narrow down your choices.
- 5 Too confusing? Get advice from knowledgeable staff at a specialty store. To make it easier choose a store that offers a gait analysis procedure like The Athlete's Foot shoe fitting system Fitzi. This is a comprehensive fit analysis tool that examines your foot in motion using video and pressure mapping to help find the right shoes for your feet.