

TOE IT DOWN!

FOOTWEAR THAT'S GOOD FOR YOU

HAVE YOU HEARD ABOUT THE SHOES THAT CLAIM TO 'WORK YOU OUT' AS YOU WEAR THEM? TONI KRASICKI INVESTIGATES...

IT'S A MIND-BOGGLING experience when it comes to choosing a pair of athletic footwear. There are shoes out there that claim to make you cycle more efficiently, run faster, dance more gracefully and climb higher. But did you know that there is a range of footwear that claims to tone your tush and burn extra calories just by wearing them?

Meet the toning shoe, offering a more toned body and a range of other wellness benefits. If you're strapped for time and want to get maximum benefit from your walking sessions or the walking done during daily activities, then toning footwear could be right up your alley.

This new trend involves a shoe with either an unstable rocker sole or which is manufactured using a muscle loading technology such as a micro-balance board that is designed to make your leg muscles work harder when you walk.

So how do they work?

Well, much the same as balancing on a wobble board. The body is forced to engage the core and activate muscles that may not otherwise be activated if using standard walking shoes, in

order to maintain its natural balance.

Footwear companies are jumping on the bandwagon so there's a myriad of choice; and, of course, all claim to be the best. Some use the micro-balance board technology to create a subtle difference to wearing standard shoes, which is much like walking in sand, while others have a very distinct rocker that works on a front to back motion that demands an increase in muscle use.

How to choose the right shoe for you

Tom Sampson from Footpoint in Mosman (Sydney) says that a shoe with a very pronounced rocker may not be suitable for older adults or anyone with balance issues. The same goes for those with major biomechanical issues. It's always best to seek a professional's advice before purchasing a pair.

So, whether you feel that your body could benefit from them or you are just looking for a comfier shoe, check out some of the hottest on the market. With the right advice you are sure to find a pair that suits your style, your feet and your wallet. ➤



NEW BALANCE – TRUE BALANCE

At first glance the True Balance walking shoe looks like any other trainer. The unassuming design is just that – unassuming. It's the toning shoe you wear when you want to tone without anyone knowing about it! The shoe features the latest NB technology, replicating the balance board and its toning and wellness benefits. Lightweight and offering a full range of motion including side to side and front to back, it's easy to like them. The shoes are very comfortable and easier to get used to wearing than the rockers as the sole is only slightly rounded; however, the effects may feel too subtle as a toning shoe for some wearers.

What they claim to do:

- Increase energy expenditure.
- Increase quadriceps, gluteals, hamstring and calf activation.
- Engage the core.

Range: Available in two colours, also makes a rocker style shoe, and available for women only.

Price: From \$160-\$180

Comfort: 5/5

WOW Factor: 5/5

Stockists: Rebel Sport, The Athlete's Foot and specialist retailers nationally or www.newbalance.com.au

'IT'S ALL ABOUT WELLNESS – WHETHER YOU LACE THEM UP BECAUSE THEY LOOK GREAT OR FOR YOUR HEALTH, YOU'RE IN FOR A COMFORTABLE RIDE.'



RYKÄ REFORM

Ryka footwear, designed for women by women, has released an attractive quality lightweight toning shoe that declares to activate, strengthen and tone your body while you walk. The Reform features a rocker sole with lateral grooves that allows a good forefoot flexion and a firm push off, giving it a more effortless rolling movement.

Overall, for a rocker style toning shoe it feels very natural and after a few hours of wearing the shoes you can definitely feel the calves fatiguing.

What they claim to do:

- Engage core muscles.
- Activate quadriceps, hamstring and calf muscles.
- Lengthen the Achilles.
- Strengthen the metatarsal region.

Range: Available in mesh or leather for women only.

Price: \$199.95

Comfort: 4.5/5

Looks: 5/5

Stockists: Available exclusively at selected The Athlete's Foot stores nationally or www.ryka.com.au

'DESIGNED EXCLUSIVELY TO FIT THE UNIQUE BIOMECHANICS OF ACTIVE WOMEN WITHOUT SACRIFICING STYLE – NARROWER IN THE HEEL AND WIDER IN THE FOREFOOT FOR UNSURPASSED COMFORT AND ATHLETIC PERFORMANCE.'



MBT MAHUTA

The Swiss are well known for their cutting-edge technology and they don't disappoint with their footwear. MBT – short for 'Masai Barefoot Technology' – uses its signature rolling sole to mimic barefoot walking on uneven ground. This instability is responsible for toning up butts and forces you to be mindful of your gait and posture.

MBT claim to be the pioneering experts of this type of footwear technology and have been at it since 1985, even patenting the pivot point on their shoes sole. With extensive scientific documentation to back up these claims, MBTs come highly recommended by chiropractors and podiatrists as a treatment for some musculoskeletal injuries, backache, and joint pain. The quality is evident in this sleek athletic design. The Mahuta is lightweight and available in some funky colours. The shoe is noticeably narrower with a slightly thinner curved sole, creating a less chunky look and also offers a greater degree of forefoot flexion compared to other MBTs.

Professional athletes from the Fly V Australia cycling team and the national alpine ski teams for Austria and Canada wear MBTs for training and recovery. Our own Layne Beachley is a fan, and even Sly Stallone has been caught in the act. Check whether your private health fund offers a rebate on the purchase of MBTs.

What they claim to do:

- Increase gluteal, hamstring and calf activation.
- Improve posture resulting in reduced neck and back pain.
- Decrease stress on hip and knee joints.
- Alleviate back, joint and foot pain.
- Improve balance and gait.
- Increase oxygen and calorie consumption.
- Improve body balance, posture and gait.

Range: Excellent variety of colours. Range includes casual, professional and athletic styles for men and women, as well as unisex sandals. Check out the funky black boots.

Price: \$385

Comfort: 5/5

Looks: 5/5

Stockists: www.au.mbt.com



PORTLAND BURN

From the Portland Get Fit toning shoe range, the Burn athletic shoe is made with a curved sole to encourage a rocker motion. It claims to do the same as other toning shoes, but looks more fashionable than sporty and is a good choice if you are on a budget. The rocker feels a little more unstable than others as there's no flex in the forefoot, so if your balance isn't the best, better to go for something with less roll.

With your purchase you'll find a handy brochure explaining the correct walking technique when using the shoe, and some exercises developed by a qualified fitness instructor to enhance the benefits.

What they claim to do:

- Improve the muscle tone of legs, thighs and buttocks.
- Improve posture.
- Reduce the strain on back muscles, ankle, knee and hip joints.
- Engage the core stabilisers.

Range: Available in two colour combinations for women only. They also have a small selection of fashionable styles to fit a variety of lifestyles including a sandal.

Price: \$89.99

Comfort: 4/5

Looks: 4/5

Stockists: www.portlandgetfit.com.au ▶

'STEP. ROLLING ACTION. STEP. ROLLING ACTION. THIS SIMPLE MOVEMENT CREATES TREMENDOUS BENEFIT.'



OPTION 5

FITFLOP WALKSTAR 3 SANDAL

FitFlop has designed a chic range of comfortable footwear using their muscle-loading Microwobbleboard™ technology. This technology is subtle and although it's supposed to increase the length of time that the muscles are activated, by the end of the day you won't feel as though you have circumnavigated the country on foot.

Tom Sampson of Footpoint in Mosman (Sydney) says podiatrists love these as they mimic soft sand walking and are good for people with bunions and plantar fasciitis. Most of his customers come back and buy several pairs in other colours because they are so comfortable to wear.

Although they are a sandal, don't be fooled, it's not one style fits all. Try different styles to get the right fit, as some can feel and fit differently depending on your foot shape.

And, if you're a sucker for keeping up with celebrities, just so you know, the likes of JLo, Brooke Shields and Julianne Moore are some who have been spotted sporting the latest FitFlop designs.

What they claim to do:

- Reduce lower back, hip, knee, and ankle joint stress.
- Increase gluteal, quadriceps and calf muscle activation.
- Absorb more shock than a normal shoe (up to 22 per cent).
- Reduce foot pressure and pain from heel spurs and plantar fasciitis.

Range: A huge range of styles and colours for women and two styles for men. Also available, a Supertone™ leather sneaker for women only.

Price: \$119.95.

Comfort: 5/5

Looks: 4.5/5



OPTION 6

**Stockists: www.fitflop.com.au
NEAT ZORI™ ORTHOTIC SANDAL**

Neat Feet, known for their foot care products, has released a comfortable sandal that offers support and comfort much like wearing an orthotic. The Neat Zori™ is a modern sports version of the traditional Japanese Zori or sandal, but combines the latest foot technology for greater support.

The sandal has a comfortable and ergonomic design with a stabilising in-sole. Made from water resistant and good quality materials, they're lightweight, so easy to pack or carry. They offer the convenience of a rubber thong with the addition of support, comfort and flair.

What they claim to do:

- Help reduce foot, leg, back and hip fatigue.
- Proven orthotic benefits – arch, heel and metatarsal support.
- Allows the feet to breathe naturally preventing unhealthy foot conditions.

Range: Comes in one unisex style in tan/black and red/white.

Price: \$49.95 (free Zori cap worth \$19.95 included)

Comfort: 4/5

Looks: 3.5/5

Stockists: Available through leading pharmacies or www.neatfeat.co.nz ■

'IF YOU WANT TO SAVE YOURSELF A TRIP TO THE PHYSIO, HEADACHES AND A WHOLE LOT OF PAIN, NEAT ZORI ARE IDEAL!'

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