

2010 Running Shoe Review

by Elisa Kinder

This year's models feature minimalist shoes for a more natural gait, shoes for extreme long-distance runners and those who enjoy running on rugged terrain.

ASICS

The structurally sound Asics Gel-Pulse 2 is a highly cushioned lightweight trainer for the neutral-footed runner. If you're looking for a solid trainer for the roads that will give you over 500 miles of running, this shoe fits the bill. The mesh upper and antimicrobial ComforDry sockliner keep the feet cool and fresh even on the warmest days. This daily trainer provides good bounce, a roomy toebox and excellent rear-foot cushioning for the heel/toe striker. With light stability, it's a good shoe to alternate during the week from your heavier trainers. Good for orthotics. (asicsamerica.com, 800-678-9435).

ECCO

Ecco's BIOM B is a well designed shoe that can handle miles and miles of training runs and the occasional race. Created with fitness runners in mind, the BIOM B's Biomechanical Sole Construction supports your body's natural running motion. They built the anatomically shaped last—the mold that forms the final shape of the shoe—based on scans of 2,500 runners' feet, which helps it fit perfectly. Light enough to wear long distances at a medium pace and snug on the foot, the BIOM B is a comfortable, innovative addition to Ecco's line of natural running shoes. Best for fitness runners. (eccousa.com, 877-240-2365)

KIGO

Joining the eco-friendly minimalist footwear trend, Kigo offers the slip-on Edge runners for walkers or hikers looking for a fully protected barefoot stride. This bare-minimum shoe is great for wearing in the water and on easy trails. The rubber toecap offers some toe protection and the full foot coverage keeps dirt, sand and debris out. The non-slip grooving on the outsole responded well in mud. Our testers said it took some getting used to, but the ground feel offered a good foot massage. The shoe keeps the feet warm in cold conditions. Size up one half- to one full-size and know that it's meant to fit snug but will stretch a bit. (kigofootwear.com, 888-293-1685).

MERRELL

Moderate pronators will want to try Merrell's CT Stamina 2. The midfoot Torsional-i-Budge (MTB) provides midfoot rigidity and medial support required by overpronators. Even with this added support, the shoe remains responsive and well cushioned. Our testers liked the slip-resistant heel and the anatomical shape of the shoe. The semi-curved, gender-specific last fit both genders well. Testing during monsoon season, we found the lighter, more flexible mesh upper managed moisture even on more humid days. Best to "store test" this shoe to ensure the control fits the need of the runner. (merrell.com, 800-288-3124)

MIZUNO

The Mizuno Wave Rider 13 has proven to be a lightweight shoe that neutral runners depend on to provide excellent flexibility, cushioning and a superior ride. The airmesh upper and excellent shock absorption make this shoe one that runners come back to year after year. Whether you're training for a marathon or a fast 10K, this shoe will make the miles feel easier. "Best pavement shoes I have ever used," said our long distance runner/tester. Because of its light structure, it's not as durable as others, but the glove-like feel is a good trade off. (mizunousa.com, 800-966-1211)

