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# TRAINING GUIDE



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AW TRAINING GUIDE



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# TRAINING & DOS & DON'TS

**John Shepherd looks at what you should and shouldn't be doing to ensure you are preparing for your event in the right way**

## **DON'T chop and change your regime**

You need a training regime that's suited to your age, level of ability and training maturity. This may take some time to get right and this is where your experience, reflection and feedback – and that of your coach, if you have one – comes into play.

Once this programme is established and it's getting results then unless there is very good reason (eg injury, change in the amount of time you have to train), then your training plan is best only tweaked, rather than revised wholesale.

This does not mean that your training plan shouldn't cycle through various phases ('micro', 'meso' and 'macro' phases as they are called), your training has to evolve and change to create long-lasting adaptation.

But that's just it. If you are a 'training programme butterfly' then you'll not derive the adaptation that adhering to a systematic, but cyclical, regime will achieve.

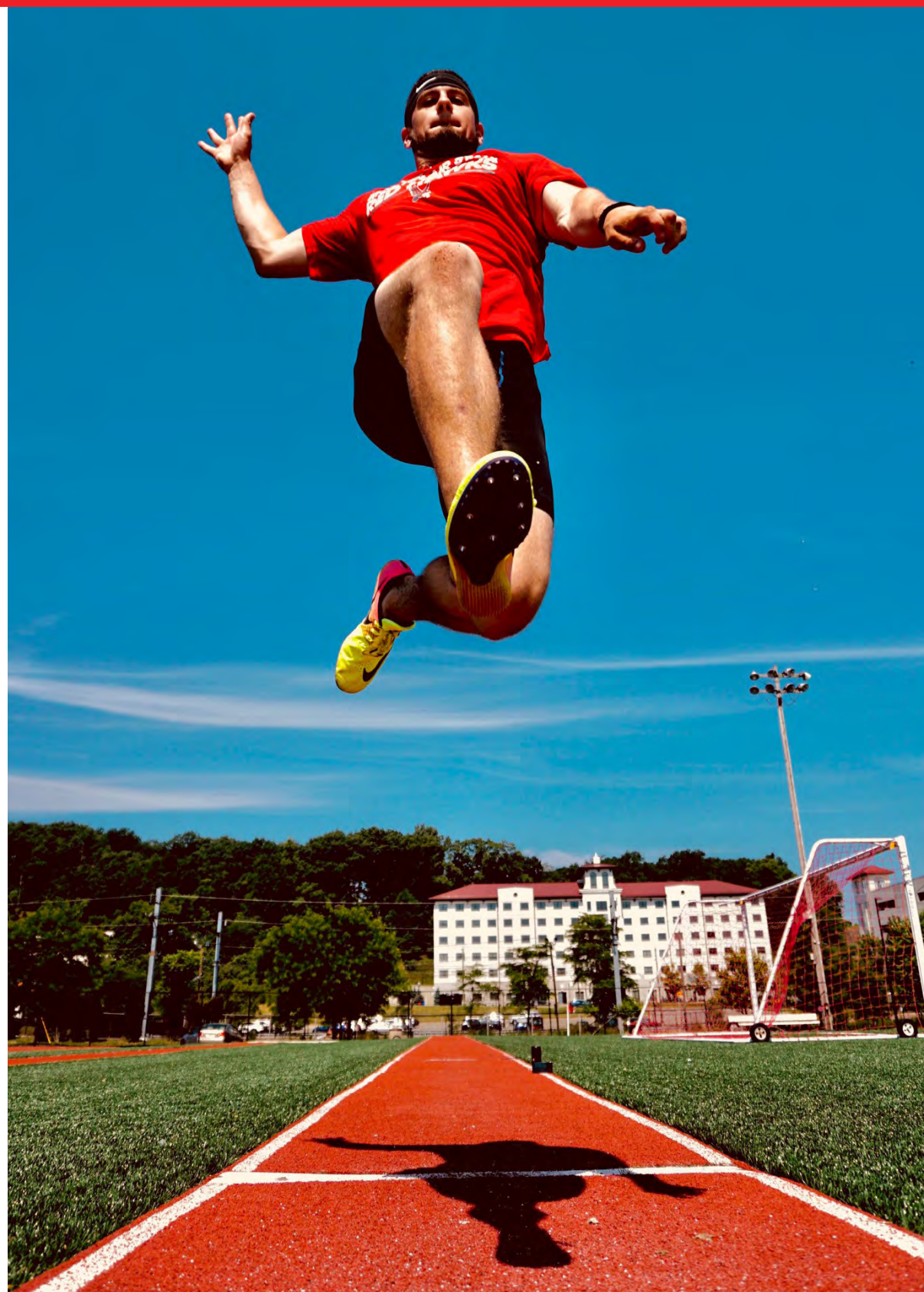
## **DO plan your competitions and know your peaks**

Competitions are what you train for. All those miles and effort will be a bit of a waste if you don't line up against your peers to test your mettle. However, competitions are stressful – they drain you not only physically but mentally.

Do too many and you run the risk of burning yourself out. Conversely, do too few and you may never reach peak and PB busting levels.

So plan the main competitions or races you will be focussing on for the winter and then for the summer. It's best to work back from the main event and fit your training plan into this, so that it leads and guides you to your goals.

Having that focus back in January will enable you to motivate yourself to push toward that August target. It will also make that target meaningful so that, on the day of the important competition, you will be fired up and ready to put all that training into practice.



## **DO tailor your training to your needs alone**

Blindly copying someone else's training is unlikely to bring you their results. Why? They aren't you! There may be some things that you can learn, however.

Perhaps you are a 100m sprinter and you see that 'X' very rarely sprints over 120m, whereas you're doing 300s and 250s regularly.

They train very much in the 'speed zone' – indeed many elite sprinters do focus down on what will make them fast and fit and not what will just make them fit.

There may be some lessons to learn, therefore, but make sure you learn them first and also make sure that those 'wonder' sessions you've heard about and are now doing don't leave you wondering why you're injured and not getting the performances you had hoped for. Your regime has to work for you.

## **DO follow an appropriate off-track lifestyle**

What you do off the track can affect your training regime. If you don't get sufficient sleep and have too many late nights, for example, then your training will suffer.

Make sure that you develop regular and consistent 'sleep hygiene' habits. Get those eight hours of shut-eye every night.

## **DO include rest and recovery 'sessions'**

At his peak, champion long jumper Greg Rutherford had to train relatively infrequently due to his injury potential. However, with his coach Dan Pfaff, he scheduled active recovery days into his training.

These were tackled with the same resolve as the jumper would tackle technical sessions. And so should you – recovery days



should include massage, recovery workouts such as swimming and other low intensity cardiovascular work, and the odd yoga or Pilates class. Don't forget that you also need complete rest days, where you do no training whatsoever.

It's not when you're training but when you are recovering that your body adapts to become faster, fitter, stronger and more enduring.

### **DON'T neglect technique**

Technique is at the centre of all athletic events, whether you're a javelin thrower or a race walker.

You can be as strong as you like, even as fast as you like, but if you cannot apply force optimally then you will not be the best athlete you can be.

Technique is crucial and it's well worth attempting to optimise it in the earlier stages of your career, refining it as the years pass.

### **DO include strength and conditioning work**

To run, jump and throw as fast or as far as you can you need to be optimally conditioned and able to withstand injury.

Strength and conditioning is crucial – so include weights, body weight exercises, plyometrics (jumping exercises), balance and core work and so on in your warm-ups.

### **DON'T isolate yourself**

If you're a runner your training regime will call for mileage and it's very easy to get caught in that "loneliness of the long distance runner" syndrome.

Although some people will enjoy and benefit from that solitude it can also be very beneficial to train in a group.

You'll learn from others and be incentivised to keep up with the



pace and the banter! Making your training regime sociable applies to all athletic disciplines.

### **DO train sensibly**

Most athletes will fit their training around work and study, so your training regime needs to work around these.

Plan accordingly.

That may mean that your weekend becomes the mainstay for your training from a time perspective.

You could fit in three good sessions over the time period of Friday evening to Sunday evening, as well as a further session in the week when you may be more time pressed.

### **DO understand your event**

Really understanding the physiological (and technical) requirements of your event will optimise your training regime.

A little understanding of muscle fibre adaptation and how the cardiovascular system responds to training will help you construct a training programme that works. Read up on these subjects, ask experts and keep up with AW Performance section content!

### **DON'T neglect your diet**

Good, real food should be the foundation of your nutrition. Without carbs, proteins and fats, you won't optimise your training.

An endurance runner may need

4000kcal a day – don't deprive your body, you will pay for it literally in the long run.

### **DO understand what works for you**

Your training regime has to work for you. Most of the previous dos and don'ts are based on that. They consider your time, your event, how you train, when your most important competitions will be and so on.

Always reflect on how your training is going and be prepared to change it every now and again to reflect progress or changing circumstances. Do this and your training regime will get better and better as the years pass – as will your performances.



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**W**HATEVER your goal, training towards it can put your body right on the edge of a very fine line.

On one side lies improvement and progress, on the other lies illness and injury. Reaching peak fitness is indeed a balancing act where rest, recovery and looking after your body can be just as crucial as all of the hard work you are putting in.

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GPs are on hand 24 hours a day if you're unsure about what treatment you need or you can book treatment directly without a GP referral.

Active Plan customer and marathon runner Debbie says: "My plan definitely helps me to keep on track. Running long distances, I visit a chiropractor and physiotherapist to iron out any problems so I'm in tip top condition and also afterwards to help with my recovery.

"I'm so lucky that my plan helps me afford to keep myself in better condition and stay healthy."

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(Mon to Fri: 9am to 8pm, Sat: 9am to 2pm)

## TOP TIPS

Chartered physiotherapist Jenny Blizard shares some top tips to help keep you fit and healthy as you work towards your target.

## WATCH FOR WARNINGS

Niggles are a common occurrence in running as your body continually adapts to the load. A recovery period allows your body to respond by increasing muscle mass and building stronger bones. A fine balance exists between too little and too much load.

Niggles that are not going away are an early warning sign, so seek help or don't be afraid to have an extra recovery day to get you back on track.

## RECHARGE

If you are indoors most of the day and either run early morning or in the evening, then it is likely that you will have low Vitamin D levels.

Frequent muscle and joint pain, tiredness and low mood are all associated with low Vitamin D and can all be associated with an injury, too.

Ensure you get outdoors for a minimum of 15 minutes at lunchtime for a walk, and have your Vitamin D levels checked by your doctor if in doubt.

## SEEK ADVICE

Sometimes it's not what you want to hear but it's what you need! Seek out a physiotherapist used to treating runners, as it can make a big difference to the advice given – especially on the type and amount of training to do if you're injured.



# FEET FIRST

Your feet are the foundations of your body. Weaknesses there can reduce performance and potentially lead to injury elsewhere, writes John Shepherd

**T**HE muscles, ligaments and tendons of the foot are crucial to athletic performance.

The arch and Achilles Tendon, for example, create elasticity. They store and return energy on impact. The Achilles can contribute over 70 per cent of the energy generated on foot-strike when running and jumping.

Many athletes suffer foot problems – from blisters to plantar fasciitis, sprains, heel spurs and bruises and Achilles issues. The good news is that there are simple strength and conditioning and footcare options that can keep these problems at bay.

By working on this regime you are likely to benefit from performance improvement, too.

## Foot strengthening exercises

### – Triangle hop

**How to:** stand on your right leg. Hop about 75cm forward and then immediately straight across to the left, about the same distance.

On landing, immediately hop back to your starting position. You are basically hopping a right-angle triangle pattern. Keep your torso upright and your landings on your forefeet.

**How many?** 4x6 reps on each foot. Change the direction of the hops for each set.

### – Catch, return and throw medicine ball from one leg

**How to:** stand on one leg, holding

the foot of the non-grounded leg a couple of centimetres from the floor. Have a partner stand at right angles to you and get them to throw a medium weight medicine ball (2-5kg) to you.

Catch the ball and control the impact (don't wobble too much!). Throw the ball back to your partner and repeat.

**How many?** 2x10 reps from each leg with your standing leg to the outside and 2x10 from each leg with your standing leg to the inside of the direction of throw.

Don't have a partner? Throw the ball against a wall and catch the return.



### Basic footcare

- Make sure your shoes fit and are correct for your gait
- Wear socks that don't create hot spots in your shoes and result in irritation and blisters. Sometimes simply turning your socks inside out will get the seams away from creating potential irritation
- Keep your toenails cut so they don't "hit" into the toe box of your shoe
- Some shoe deodorisers also reduce moisture build-up, which can alleviate potential blister-forming conditions

### Plantar fasciitis

Plantar fasciitis affects the bottom of the feet, where the tissue thickens and causes restriction and pain. The consequences of the condition are reduced ankle movement and ability to absorb force through the feet, making it difficult to train.

Research has indicated that reduced ankle dorsi-flexion (toes up position) is a potential cause of plantar fasciitis, while research in the *Clinical Journal of Sports Medicine* noted that sufferers tend to "hit" the ground harder with more vertical "ground reaction force load rates".

Runners with a history of the condition often have lower arches (the arch is a shock absorber and energy returner).

### Exercises to beat

#### Plantar fasciitis

##### – Towel curls

This exercise is designed to strengthen the muscles that support the foot's arch.

**How to:** place your feet on a towel then, using your toes, pull the towel in towards you. Hold for a few seconds and then push it back.

**How many?** 3x5 reps

##### – Toe strengthening/ foot stretch

**How to:** Take hold of the toes of one foot while sitting and gently pull them toward you to stretch the arch of your foot. Hold for five seconds, release and repeat.

**How many?** 5x5 for each foot

##### – Calf stretching

Tight calf muscles can also cause plantar fasciitis so regular calf stretching can help to guard against the condition developing.

**How to:** face a wall and lean against it with your outstretched arms. Move the leg with the calf muscle to be stretched back, keeping your heel on the ground to stretch the calf.

**How many?** 4 holding for 20-30sec

**Variation:** do as previously described but with the rear knee bent. This will place emphasis on the smaller calf muscle (soleus) rather than the larger one (gastrocnemius).

### Shoeless exercises

There has been a move toward minimalist running shoes and barefoot running in recent times, with the claimed benefits being improved running form and reduced injury due to the resulting forefoot strike.

However, minimalist shoes or barefoot running is not for everyone and needs a carefully controlled introduction. What might be more relevant is the use of other barefoot exercises and very controlled, short bouts of barefoot running to strengthen the foot and thus tackle conditions such as plantar fasciitis, as well as a myriad of other possible injuries.

### Barefoot running introduction for all events

**How to:** run 40m gently in socks on dry grass or an athletics track, walk back and repeat.

**How many?** 4-6

Increase reps and speed as your body gets used to the activity. You should naturally forefoot run.

### Barefoot run drills

Many common running drills can be performed without shoes – marching high knees, lunges, various height cycling drills etc.

**How many?** 3-4 drills 2 x each over 20m

**Y**OUR body's ability to balance is among the most important, yet often overlooked, aspects of training.

In groundbreaking research being led by exercise scientists at Manchester Metropolitan University (MMU), physiologists are beginning to understand how and why it is essential we maintain and improve our powers of equilibrium.

Here we uncover some of the surprising facts that underpin your ability to stay upright:

### Your brain, not your muscles, controls balance

It's widely assumed that poorer powers of balance as we age are down to the loss in muscle mass and strength that occurs with age. But the brain plays a more important role.

In our twenties and thirties, we each have about 70,000 specialised nerve cells – motor neurons – in the lower part of the spinal cord that connect with our leg muscles to control balance and movement.

By the age of 75, 40 per cent of these motor neurons have been lost, resulting in lower levels of co-ordination and balance in people with all levels of physical fitness.

"It's as much a part of ageing as greying hair," says Jamie McPhee, professor of musculoskeletal physiology at MMU. "And there's no evidence at all that staying fit, even as a top level masters athlete, will prevent the decline."

### Hard training won't prevent balance losses

In MMU research funded by the European Union and the UK Medical Research Council (MRC) and conducted with members of the British Masters Athletics Federation, McPhee and his team have identified a simple exercise



**Balance is essential to performance and to healthy ageing. Here are some facts which may surprise you**

# MAINTAINING EQUILIBRIUM

as the most important in balance preservation.

They showed that young adults – even those who are not very athletic – can easily stand on one leg, eyes closed, for 30 seconds. By the time the average person is 70 years old they manage only four to five seconds doing the same test. In theory, the masters athletes who participated in the studies, some of whom were training for up

to 14 hours a week, should have managed more than the general population of their peers, their superior muscle strength perhaps expected to provide a stronger base. But that was not the case.

Even with well-trained masters athletes, they found that those in their seventies could hold the position only for around significantly better than average.

"It is appealing to think that

regular exercise and training might prevent the death of motor neurons during ageing. Unfortunately, we found no evidence to support this idea," McPhee says. "All older athletes (endurance and sprinters alike) showed signs of a similar degree of motor neuron loss."

### You should start balance training now

According to the MMU findings, the

only way to hold on to balance and prevent falls is to practice balance-specific training.

Encouragingly, while the loss of motor neurons that control balance is irreversible, the master athletes studied by McPhee and his colleagues appeared better able to "rescue" muscles that had lost their nerve connection.

"This rescue is realised by the sprouting of nearby, healthy nerves,



**Manchester Metropolitan University**

that can establish a new connection between the muscle and nerve," McPhee says. "And athletes can also learn to better control the nerves that remain by practising new balance and co-ordination exercises."

Starting balance training as early as possible provides the best protection. "We recommend you include it in your warm-up and cool-down," says McPhee.

### Try standing on one leg every day

Balance is needed in every aspect of sports performance, from spatial awareness (being aware of your body's position in relation to what's around you) to proprioception (the body's sense of movement and position).

It aids jumping and prevents falls since our ability to stay upright is down to the brain knowing the precise position of the body, even when our eyes are closed.

"The brain knows what's stable and what's not," McPhee says. "One of the most effective balance training exercises is to stand on one leg, eyes closed, every day. It sounds simple – until you try it."

"Once you can do the eyes closed single leg stand for several seconds, you need to challenge yourself more. Try moving your centre of mass by swaying on one leg with eyes closed and then try tying your shoelaces on one leg."



The way you fuel your body before, during and after training and competition can have a huge impact on performance. **Andrew Hamilton** looks at nutritional strategies to help achieve success

### Sprints, jumps and throws v endurance

Your chosen event will have a significant impact on your nutritional requirements. That's because different events tend to draw on different energy systems in the body and have different recovery requirements.

In terms of energy, the very short, highly intensive/explosive events such as flat-out sprinting, jumping and throwing rely heavily on the 'ATP/phosphocreatine' energy system. Slightly longer events such as the 200m and 400m rely increasingly on the 'lactate/anaerobic' energy system.

As the event duration increases further, the prime source of energy switches more and more to the aerobic system.

### Before and during an event

Only those running the marathon distance and beyond need to be good at burning fat to derive energy. That's because it's difficult to store enough carbohydrate in the muscles (glycogen) to fuel the entire event.

For all other distances and events, energy will be mainly derived from carbohydrate. There is a subtle difference, however. As the distance/duration increases, it becomes increasingly important to ensure that:

- Your muscles are fully 'loaded' (topped up) with carbohydrate before you go to the start line. This means tapering and consuming a high-carbohydrate diet in the two to three days prior to your event.
- When racing in events lasting more than an hour, consider

# FUEL UP



replenishing carbohydrate (in the form of drinks and gels) while on the move. Aim for 60-80g of carbohydrate per hour taken as a 2:1 glucose:fructose formula.

### Pre-event meals and snacks

These should be light, easily digestible and consumed at least two hours beforehand (depending on how cast iron your tummy is!). Ideally, foods should be low in fat while providing decent amounts of carbohydrate and some protein.

Research shows that slower releasing carbohydrates, such as oats, pasta, beans and so on are superior for subsequent

### The four pillars of nutrition recovery, whatever your event

**Carbohydrate** – needed to replenish muscle glycogen.

**Protein** – needed to repair muscle fibre damage and to promote muscle hypertrophy (growth) and adaptation.

**Water** – to replace fluid lost as sweat and to aid muscle glycogen replenishment.

**Electrolytes** – to replenish minerals lost in sweat (sodium, chloride, calcium, magnesium).

performance, producing fewer blood sugar spikes and helping maximise fat oxidation during exercise.

### Hydration before and during an event

Starting an event fully hydrated is also important, especially in hot conditions. Even relatively mild dehydration has been shown to impair strength, motor skills and co-ordination.

In practice, this means all athletes should drink plenty of fluid in the two to three hours leading up to a race or training session. If you're adequately hydrated, your urine will be no darker than a pale straw colour.

If it isn't, drink more! Water or low-carbohydrate electrolyte drinks are best to hydrate with.



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# TRAINING MOTTO

Do you have a phrase or saying you repeat to yourself when the going gets tough? We asked the elites what tricks they use

## Stay patient

When it gets tough in a running training session I always think pain is inevitable and you only improve when you're out of your comfort zone! For lactic training and reps I tend to break down the session into mental chunks so it's less scary!

For technical sessions my best advice is to be patient because you will have good weeks and bad weeks. Take into consideration your energy levels and fatigue when being critical if it goes wrong.

Also try to focus on technical cues rather than throwing or jumping high because when your technique is good in competitions you'll perform!

On the whole I am patient with my progress in training and not too hard on myself when it goes wrong. Remember it's a long-term process and things happen with time!

– Niamh Emerson

## Get uncomfortable

When training it is very easy to settle when you aren't feeling good or the going gets tough but to keep myself motivated I say "get comfortable with being uncomfortable"... it makes the racing so much easier!

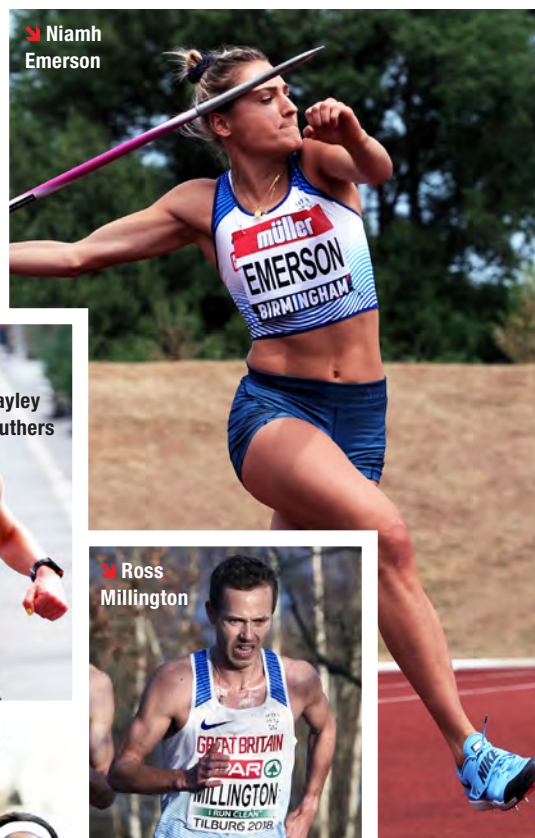
– Marc Scott

## Stay in the moment

Focus on each moment you're in. Take one minute or rep at a



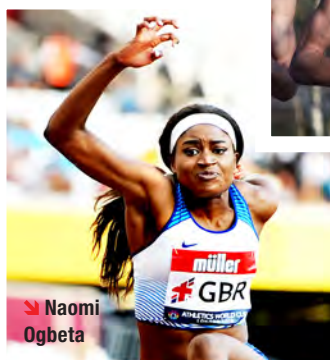
➤ Marc Scott



➤ Niamh Emerson



➤ Hayley Carruthers



➤ Naomi Ogbeta

time and think of smooth, relaxed movements.

– Hayley Carruthers

## Hard work is worth it

When the going gets tough in training I know that working hard

will be worth it in the end and that each training session is a lesson in itself. I'd rather have a bad session than not even trying at all.

– Naomi Ogbeta

## Relax

I just try and focus on being relaxed and efficient with my effort, which is obviously challenging during harder training but is something I come back to. I also think about any shorter or long-term goals to try and focus my attention.

– Ross Millington



➤ Ross Millington

PICTURES: MARK SHEARMAN

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MONTMORENCY  
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# CHOOSE CHERRIES

Why adding this versatile fruit to your training regime can bring big benefits

**G**ETTING the most out of each workout and making performance gains is a lot easier when you recover quickly after exercise. Tart cherry juice is rapidly gaining a following among endurance athletes as an exercise recovery aid.

It's not just what you eat or drink after you exercise that affects your recovery, though. While post-workout refuelling is essential to rehydrate and replenish your muscles, what you do before working out is vital, too.

Studies have shown that drinking U.S. Montmorency tart cherry juice for multiple days leading up to intense exercise may help aid recovery.

Tart cherries contain natural compounds called anthocyanins, which contribute to the fruit's ruby red colour and distinctive taste.

Studies have also shown that U.S. Montmorency tart cherry juice helped aid recovery and reduce strength loss in runners and cyclists who consumed it twice a day in the week leading up to a race, as well as during and after a race.

Researchers suggest using tart cherry juice daily for at least a week before an intense event. How much do you need?

Most of the studies have provided participants with two eight-ounce servings of tart cherry juice a day. Each serving is equivalent to nearly 100 U.S. Montmorency tart cherries.

SEE THE SCIENCE BEHIND RUNNING ON RED AT  
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## WAYS TO MAKE MONTMORENCY U.S. TART CHERRIES A PART OF YOUR ROUTINE

**DRINK UP:** Not only is tart cherry juice delicious, drinking one eight-ounce serving before your workout and another afterwards packs a nutritious punch equivalent to nearly 100 U.S. Montmorency tart cherries in each serving!

**ON THE GO:** Carry some dried tart cherries in your bag or try an easy, do-it-yourself trail mix using dried cherries, almonds, pistachios and wholegrain cereal.

**IN A SMOOTHIE:** Also try a tart cherry smoothie – blending tart cherry juice and Greek yoghurt with frozen tart cherries.

**STRAIGHT UP:** Look for tart cherry juice or concentrate in your local supermarket or buy it online. You can mix it with water or drink it straight as a shot.



# WATCH & LEARN

Paul Freary runs the rule over the Polar Vantage, which will certainly give you an advantage when it comes to training

**C**OMBINING the most advanced GPS and heart rate monitor on the market with the ability to measure power as you train – not mention a great software user interface – means the new Polar Vantage V watch is a very useful training tool indeed.

The Vantage series of watches offer the latest in heart rate monitoring from the wrist (and can pair with a chest strap if you wish), combining both optical and skin contact measurement.

This means they offer the very best wrist-based measurement around, with none of the spikes in readings we've previously experienced.

This accuracy ensures reliable feedback that's measurable session to session, day to day – even in demanding conditions.

Link this accuracy to the built-in GPS, as well as the features in the accompanying app and website – such as training load tracking and running index – and you can

quickly build an easy to understand picture of how your training and, importantly, recovery is progressing.

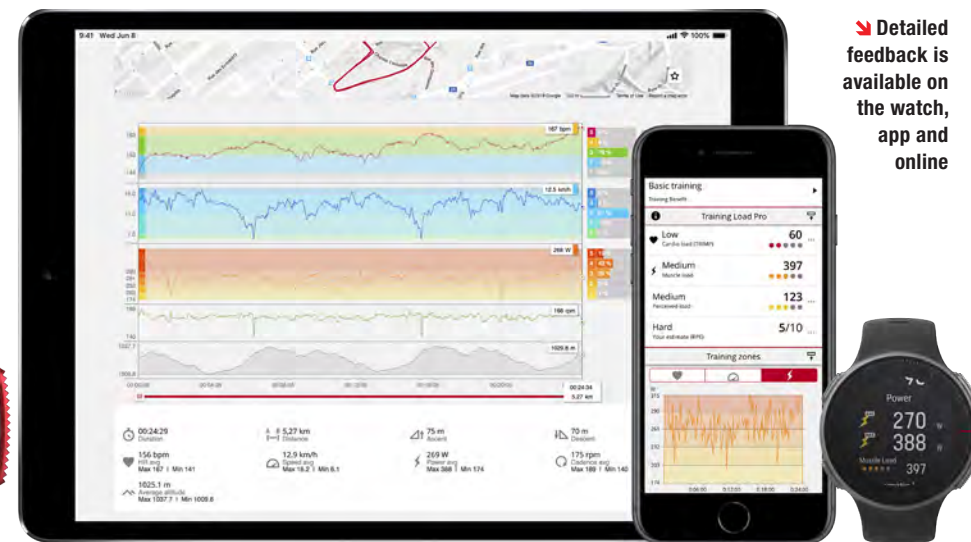
With 130 sport profiles built into the watch, any activity you undertake can be tracked for effort and performance with easy to read feedback being shown on the clear, colour screen.

Wear the watch all day and night and the information it can collect continues, with 24-hour activity tracking, continuous heart rate and sleep tracking all combining to build a complete picture of your day, your training and your rest and recovery.

The software takes a few weeks to build a database of your usual activity levels and understand you as an individual. It's this feature which gives you confidence in the feedback which the watch begins to give you.

Having used it for a few months during a marathon training block, I found these details very informative and did take note of the advice to perhaps train a little easier on certain days, whereas on others it

➤ **Polar Vantage V:** has the ability to measure power as you train



➤ Detailed feedback is available on the watch, app and online

# POLAR®

gave me the confidence to push on.

The Vantage V model has all the features of the M, with the addition of added Power to the equation.

A long-time metric used in cycling; power essentially provides a measurement of the load on your muscles from running. It's important to remember that this works with the measurement of heart rate and not instead of. This way you get a more complete picture of the effort and effect of your training.

Whist power is a very complex metric to explain I try to think of it as a 'complete figure' to represent a collection of data.

So it's a number to combine heart rate and speed, together with GPS and barometric data.

The watch is looking at the effort used in relation to the course you

are running. Again, this helps give it the ability to measure your effort and help with recovery. The power metric also reacts to change much quicker than heart rate, allowing you to maintain sustained effort more easily.

The V watch also has the ability to upload routes and follow them, should you wish to explore unknown territory and venture into the wilds, along with a barometric sensor which will give more accuracy to altitude and assist with the calculation of power.

These are both amazing watches offering an almost overwhelming amount of feedback but, used effectively, they'll certainly give you an advantage.

■ **The Polar Vantage M costs £249.00, while the Polar Vantage V is £439.00. For more information visit [polar.com](http://polar.com)**

➤ **Polar Vantage M:** shown (left) with special 'marathon season strap'



# CHOOSE WISELY

Paul Freary guides you through the important process of finding the shoes that are right for your individual running needs

**F**INDING the best running shoes to suit your particular style may be a daunting task, but it needn't be and with the help of your local running specialist store you'll find a shoe that will make your running more efficient, comfortable and enjoyable.

## Dynamic movement

It's important to remember that running is a dynamic movement and as such places lots of stress on the legs and feet.

The impact forces placed on your feet can be around three to five times that of your body weight, so the correct shoes are very important. Your running shoes will reduce the effect of impact on your joints and help stabilise your feet.

Also consider that it's difficult, if not impossible, to assess how the feet move when you are standing still. Don't let someone tell you 'your feet roll in' simply by looking at you stood in your bare feet. Whilst your feet may look like they lean in, a dynamic assessment is the best way to check.

The 26 bones of the foot form an arch shape and it's this arch that flexes as you walk and run to help absorb impact. The amount of flexibility you have will dictate how much your foot rolls inwards - its pronation.

The foot will naturally strike the ground on its outside (lateral) edge. In doing this it creates more space under the arch of the foot on the inside (medial) side. This space

➤ The 26 bones of the foot form to create the arch which will flex to help absorb impact



gives the foot more space in which to flex to absorb impact.

It's this flexibility which is important and can be encouraged or reduced by different shoes.

## Gait analysis

This is a readily available system found in many specialist running stores. By running on a treadmill for a few minutes, the way in which your feet move as you hit the ground can help staff find the most suitable shoes for you.

Whilst the 'wet foot test' has often been referred to as a useful

means of deciding on your foot shape, it only shows the shape of your feet when stood still, not running, so don't let this mislead you.

## Flexibility

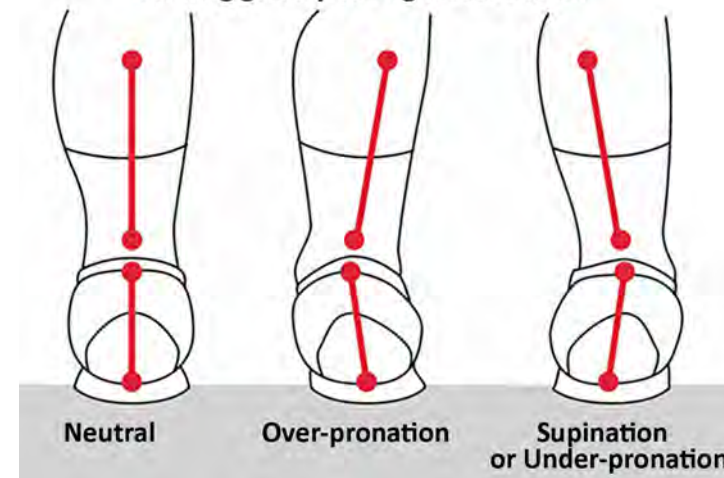
It's the foot's flexibility that will decide how it moves when you run. A more flexible foot will roll inwards, over-pronating; a more rigid foot will remain on the outside edge of the foot, supinated.

If you can't make it to a running specialist store you could try getting a friend to run behind you to



➤ The 'wet foot test' is a very general guide. A dynamic assessment will always be better

Running gait styles - right foot shown



observe the way in which your foot lands and rolls forward, checking for any sideways motion.

## The basics

Essentially if the foot rolls inwards a supportive or control shoe will reduce this roll and if the shoe is keeping to the outer, lateral edge of the foot a more flexible or neutral shoe should help.

## Heel drop

The difference in the amount of cushioning in the heel of a shoe compared to that in the forefoot is often referred to as heel drop. A shoe with 30mm of cushioning in the heel and 20mm in the forefoot therefore has a 10mm drop.

For many years shoes had around a 10-12mm drop but more recently there has been a trend to reduce this to anything from 8mm to zero!

For many a typical shoe with an 8mm drop will feel quite normal but if you've had injuries, particularly to the Achilles or calf muscles, take care.

A lower drop shoe may aggravate this. A deeper midsole

cushioning can also be misleading as many of the more maximal cushioned shoes have very low drops. Don't immediately think more cushioning will reduce injury by reducing impact, so if in doubt speak to your footwear specialist about this.

## Pronation

This is the natural movement of the foot when it strikes the ground. After the initial impact, it rolls inwards, through the space created by the arch, to absorb the impact of the body's weight.

Depending on the flexibility of the foot (there are 33 joints, so lots of room for flexibility) the foot will vary in the amount it rolls.

## Over-pronation

After landing on the outside edge of the heel, the foot rolls inwards and due to the higher degree of flexibility in the foot, it rolls inwards.

## Under-pronation

In a more rigid foot, as it hits the ground on the outer side of the heel, the foot stays on this outside edge as it rolls forward.

## Neutral

The foot lands on the outside edge of the heel then rolls inwards until it is in a relatively straight line with the lower leg.

## Other factors

You'll also want to consider where you'll be running when choosing your shoes. The road, trails the fells or even a mixture of everything.

Different shoe types offer varying levels of cushioning, flexibility, control and grip. But above all else, the shoes should feel comfortable as soon as you put them on.

Modern shoes benefit from years of research and developments in technology that you should be able to put them on and run in almost immediately.

In the right shoes your running should be a more pleasurable and enjoyable experience giving you many happy miles ahead.



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RUNNING SHOE GURU  
PAUL FREARY'S  
REVIEWS OF THE  
LATEST FOOTWEAR  
MODELS ON THE  
MARKET**





**Saucony – Ride ISO 2 (above)****Price:** £120.00**Stockist:** saucony.com

The update to this popular model gives it a lighter, softer and more responsive feel. Due for launch next month, we've been using a preview pair for a few miles now and, while it remains familiar enough for regular users, those new to the style will be pleased by the smooth, luxurious ride it offers.

It feels a little more flexible than before and it's a no nonsense, well-cushioned model in a lightweight package that is happy at any pace.

**New Balance – 1080v9 (below)****Price:** £135.00**Stockist:** newbalance.com

With almost maximal levels of cushioning in a lightweight package, this shoe uses a one-piece injection-moulded midsole engineered to absorb heel strike yet remain stable throughout the runner's gait. It's this one piece sole that gives it a remarkably smooth feel, soaking up every lump and bump in the road, feeling like it could go on forever.

The simplicity of the shoe hides how accomplished

it feels, making it great for the high mileage athlete. The timely London Edition featured here is a limited edition version, priced at a slight premium over the regular version at £140.00.

**On – Cloudswift (right)****Price:** £135.00**Stockist:** on-running.com

Described as having the 'ultimate cushioning', we think this is certainly the best cushioned shoe from the brand so far.

The new 'Helion' foam used in the sole creates large clouds that cover the entire sole of the shoe offering the familiar 'running on cloud' feel, albeit in this model gives a softer overall ride than others in the range.

The shoe does have a slight rolling sensation to it, propelling the foot forwards and feeling responsive and suited to faster paced running. It's our favourite shoe to date from On.

**HOKA – Clifton 5 (above)****Price:** £115.00**Stockist:** hokaoneone.eu

Good news for fans of the shoes is that this season's update is mainly cosmetic rather than involving any significant changes.

The familiar ride that comes from the maximal cushioning and rocker sole shape is unchanged and the shoe remains as good as ever. It's a soft ride and best for those with a very neutral gait as the cushioning can feel a little too soft and unstable for some.

**ASICS – Gel Nimbus 21 (right)****Price:** £155.00**Stockist:** asics.com

Celebrating its 21st edition, the new Nimbus is updated throughout. Its midsole features a dual layer construction of the brand's latest midsole foam technologies; Flytefoam Lyte to absorb shock and impact and Flytefoam Propel to help push the foot forwards. These sandwich the famous GEL cushioning in the heel and forefoot, making it the

# NEUTRAL

For the biomechanically efficient runner and those simply looking for a comfortable, well-cushioned shoe, neutral models are the way to go. These are some of the best around, all featuring great cushioning that promises to soak up the impact of every step



brand's most cushioned model.

It's a stable ride, too, keeping the foot under control no matter how far you go. The overall fit and feel justifies its honour of being the brand's flagship model.

**Brooks – Ricochet (above)****Price:** £120.00**Stockist:** brooksrunning.com

Combining the trend for Polyurethane (TPU) based midsoles, this shoe does this in the form of DNA AMP, with a layer of the brand's usual BioMoGo DNA.

Together we have a shoe that offers a familiar

cushioned feel with a slightly livelier toe-off. It's a nice combination – where full TPU shoes can feel too soft and springy or even unstable, here you get the best of both worlds.

The knitted upper is seamless, while a unique heel collar and lining gives the shoe a barely noticeable feel around the rear of the foot. It's a very comfortable fit, meaning that training should be no problem.






**Saucony – Guide ISO 2**
**Price:** £120.00

**Stockist:** saucony.co.uk

This update sees just minor changes from the previous version. These add to the cushioning but don't detract from what runners already like about the shoe.

It offers good levels of control for over-pronators and manages to do that while still being relatively soft and well cushioned. Cushioning comes from the PWRFOAM midsole and a layer of EVERUN foam placed directly under the shoe's foot bed.

Whilst only a slim layer of additional cushioning, it does give the shoe an improved feel and certainly adds a little 'spring' to the ride.

It's light, well cushioned and works well in providing good support.


**ASICS – Gel Kayano 25 ISO 2**
**Price:** £155.00

**Stockist:** asics.com

It may be the most expensive of the shoes featured here, but there's no denying its quality. The Kayano is feature-packed with the brand's key technologies for controlling over-pronation.

The midsole is made up of multiple components to provide cushioning and support, with additional motion control features incorporated into the sole and heel counter of the shoe.

Together these features do an exceptional job of keeping the foot stable as well as offering lots of smooth riding cushioning, making the shoe feel luxurious from the first step. The fit and feel live up to the price tag so is worth considering if price isn't an issue.


**Brooks – Ravenna 10**
**Price:** £110.00

**Stockist:** brooksrunning.com

Rolling out the guiderail control system to another model in their line-up, Brooks now have their proprietary system installed in all their control shoes.

Whilst we first looked at the guiderails with a little trepidation, our fears were very quickly dispelled as it works incredibly well.

The most popular model featuring guiderails is the Adrenaline GTS, offering the stability system combined with lots of great, plush cushioning. The Ravenna offers a familiar feel, albeit in a slightly lighter and more responsive package.

Competitively priced, it's worth considering for anyone looking for a light and responsive support shoe.


**Mizuno – Wave Inspire 15 (top)**
**Price:** £125.00

**Stockist:** mizuno.com

Stable yet with a very smooth ride, the Inspire continues to deliver a good balance of cushioning and control that has made it so popular over its 15-version history.

Support comes in a dynamic nature from the Wave plate, which runs the width



# SUPPORT

Support, control, stability or motion control – these are all terms used by various manufacturers to describes models that aim to reduce an excessive amount of pronation (the inwards rotation of the foot and ankle). There's no right amount of control required, just what feels right to help your running gait feel most comfortable.

of the rearfoot. Being 'stronger' on the medial side of the shoe and tapering across to the lateral edge means the shoe can handle over-pronators of various degrees. It feels light, too, and is great for faster-paced runs or even as a race day shoe for heavier runners requiring a little control.

**New Balance – 860v9 (above right)**
**Price:** £120.00

**Stockist:** newbalance.co.uk

Now into its ninth update, the 860 is firmly established as a go-to shoe for those seeking dependable support from a high mileage shoe.

The support in this version has been increased a little, with the medial post running a little further from the heel towards the front of the arch.

This increase ensures plenty of control for even the most severe over-pronators, whilst at the same time the overall weight hasn't increased noticeably. Improvements in cushioning and the outsole design mean it still performs very well and flexibility is good, even at faster speeds. This is a solid, reliable performer that delivers every time.


**HOKA – Arahi 3 (left)**
**Price:** £114.99

**Stockist:** hokaoneone.eu

This update brings an upper which has a new lightweight engineered mesh design that's neat, functional and fits well.

Control comes from the 'J Frame' dual density construction of the midsole. This J-shaped support essentially cups the rearfoot on impact and aims to reduce over-pronation as the foot rolls forward.

It works relatively well and, in this update, feels considerably firmer than in previous version of the shoe. The cushioning is still in the maximal category, and, combined with the rocker design, it helps to roll the foot forwards smoothly and efficiently.

Many runners still find themselves intrigued by the brand, so for those using support type shoes, this would be the shoe to look at.





# RACERS

Built for speed, these shoes are perfect for that race day PB or simply picking up the pace on that midweek tempo run.

## ASICS – Roadhawk FF2

**Price:** £105.00

**Stockist:** asics.com

With a familiar ASICS feel, these shoes offer the perfect blend of race day lightweight performance and training shoe cushioning.

We wouldn't use them as an everyday trainer but, for speedwork, tempo runs and racing they are a great option. The cushioning comes from the Flytefoam Propel, so gives a little spring to your step, with a snappy toe-off that encourages a quicker turnover. The upper is a seamless, breathable mesh, feeling soft and sock-like around the foot.

## Brooks – Launch 6

**Price:** £95.00

**Stockist:** brooksrunning.com

Largely unchanged from previous versions, the Launch is a versatile, lightweight model that's made for faster paced running without compromising on cushioning quality.

A perfect racing shoe for the heavier runner or those that don't want the lower drop design offered by many lightweight models, this is also happy in everyday use.

The new upper is in-keeping with many of this year's shoes in the brand's range and has a one piece upper for a seamless fit. It's an uncomplicated, lightweight trainer that's happy at any speed.

## New Balance – 1500v5

**Price:** £100.00

**Stockist:** newbalance.co.uk

Not only does this shoe look fast, it feels fast and it's a rare beast too, being a lightweight racing model with the addition of a medial post for support.

It's not going to stop excessive over pronation, but it will provide a little control and it certainly helps such a light shoe feel more stable, helping the foot plant and giving a more powerful toe-off.

We like the outsole too; it offers a nice amount of traction to help you attack tight bends in any conditions. This is a shoe built for out and out speed.

# NEW KICKS

There are a few newcomers to the market that aim to give you more (or less) with radical designs

## ASICS – Metaride (right)

**Price:** £225.00

**Stockist:** asics.com

This shoe focuses on efficiency, cushioning and fit. It must be said, it feels radically different in all areas.

The deep, cushioned sole has a zero-drop construction, although that cushioning does taper from the ball of the foot in order to give the shoe its very distinctive rocker feel. The dual layer cushioning has a softer bottom layer with a firmer layer on top.

The difference in shape between the two layers exaggerates the foot's roll significantly, almost throwing you forwards into toe-off. It's very strange at first but, after a few miles, it does feel really quite natural and easy to progress in. It's beautifully made and racks up the miles with a distinctive and smooth feel that pushes the boundaries of design and performance.



offers great cushioning in a stable and light shoe with a great fitting upper.

A cleverly engineered midsole adds stability to the relatively light material, making it feel very secure and maximising the deep cushioning without any wobble. It's a refreshing alternative for runners seeking a maximal type shoe.

## New Balance – Fresh Foam More (below)

**Price:** £125.00

**Stockist:** newbalance.co.uk

After the success in recent years of Hoka's maximal cushioned shoes, it was a surprise that other manufacturers didn't venture into similar territory.

Well, now this model promises some real competition in the market. Taking the maximal cushioning principles and combining them with their lightweight Fresh Foam material, we have a shoe that



## Vivo Barefoot – Primus Lite (right)

**Price:** £100.00

**Stockist:** vibobarefoot.com

'Barefoot' shoes are still around, and this new model offers truly minimal experience. The sole is incredibly thin, placing the foot close to the ground for a connected and naturally balanced feel. These aren't the type of shoes you can immediately run in and minimalist constructions require an extended period of adjustment, yet for those accustomed to the design these are one of the lightest and most flexible options we've tried.





**INOV-8 – Roclite 290 (above)****Price:** £120.00**Stockist:** inov-8.com

This lightweight shoe is made for moving quickly over difficult terrain. It safely ticks that box, feeling great right out of the box and offering a comfortable, flexible and responsive ride.

The 4mm drop allows the foot to really feel the contours of the ground and where this model really excels is when plenty of grip is required.

The 6mm lugs do just that and, with the outsole impregnated with the brand's much talked about Graphene, this shoe will give you all the purchase you need to tackle the ups and downs of the hills and trails with real confidence.

**Mizuno – Diachi 4 (below)****Price:** £119.99**Stockist:** mizuno.com

With a Michelin rubber outsole and a design looking similar to that of a mountain bike tyre, this shoe offers fantastic grip without being too bulky.

The shoe feels similar to a lightweight, performance trainer, flexible and able to pick up the pace, but with the added benefit of grip that lets you go anywhere.

The outsole pattern features lugs at various angles right across its surface which ensure traction on any terrain or contours.

The upper offers a light, soft, comfortable fit more like that of a regular road shoe, but it's reinforced in key areas to give it the necessary protection and durability.

As an off-road shoe with road shoe comfort, this model delivers.



# TRAIL

These go-anywhere shoes will allow you to take the road less travelled, with traction and cushioning to ensure grip and comfort.

**Hoka – Speedgoat 3 (right)****Price:** £124.99**Stockist:** hokaoneone.eu

The addition of a Vibram outsole is essentially what now separates the Speedgoat from the other popular off-road models in the brand's line-up.

The shoe still features the maximal cushioning design Hoka has become known for but it's the sole that gives it the best traction and durability in the range.

The upper is redesigned this season and really brings the shoe up to date, with a modern feel and design using premium materials for a great fit.

One nice touch is the broad toe bumper and reinforced upper of the toe-box, which should make this shoe especially durable regardless of the conditions.

The deep cushioning is really made for ultra-distance events and although we haven't yet ventured quite as far in the shoes it's easy to see that they'll handle that punishment with ease.



For everyday use they feel well cushioned and able to soak up anything in terms of impact. For those looking for shoe with endless cushioning and the reliable grip of Vibram this is the one to go for.

**ASICS – Gel FujiRado (left)****Price:** £120.00**Stockist:** asics.com

It's the BOA fastening that immediately makes these shoes stand out from the crowd. Offering quick and easy adjustment of the shoe, the system allows you to make tiny changes, tightening or loosening by as little as a millimetre at a time for a totally customised fit.

The system is also great should the shoes be covered in mud – simply release the fastener and slip them off.

The multi-directional grip offers confidence on steep descents and enough bite to dig in on soft, loose surfaces.

The cushioning is light and flexible with a feel similar to that of a lightweight performance trainer, making it great on the varying trail terrain you'll encounter.







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