

Know your shoe type: We can help!



One often can tell a stability shoe by the telltale gray insert on the instep, which indicates firmer cushioning for runners who overpronate, or whose feet roll inward.

By Striperpedia staff

Throughout this site you'll see different terms used for different types of running shoes. Here's a breakdown of each category of shoe type:

Lightweight Performance

Lightweight performance running shoes are responsive to the needs of racing, tempo runs or fast training days. These are made for runners who are serious about improving their times, training for races or wearing performance footwear during competitions. Usually built on a semi-curved or curved last, lightweight running shoes have less cushioning than a normal running shoe. Some lightweight running shoes are relatively stable; others are not. You should choose a lightweight running shoe if you're a quick, efficient runner with no severe pronation problems who wants a light second shoe for fast-paced training. Lightweight running shoes also are intended for runners who are looking for a racing shoe but want more support and cushioning than a super-light racer.

Air

Air is a proprietary Nike cushioning technology. The Air-Sole unit that runs underfoot contains a specific amount of pressurized air. Upon impact at the heel, the air disperses, cushioning the entire foot as it rolls through its gait. Nike Air cushioning comes in a variety of forms: full-length, heel, forefoot, three-quarter length, dual-pressure, symmetrical and asymmetrical. These air units come in four varieties: Nike Air for standard-impact cushioning, Max Air with a fuller air volume for maximum cushioning, Zoom Air with a lower-profile air unit for quicker responsiveness, and Tuned Air units that incorporate mechanical elements into a maximum-volume Air-Sole unit .

Stability

Stability running shoes are for runners who mildly overpronate and need extra support through the heel, midsole and post area. You need a stability running shoe if you have a flat or low arch and see most of your footprint (which indicates overpronation), or if you have a heavier frame. Stability running shoes reduce overpronation that can cause excessive foot motion and increases your risk of injury. Sever overpronators with extremely flat arches will need motion-control shoes for running.

Cushion

Cushioned running shoes are constructed mainly for those who are looking to put in a lot of miles during their training. Cushioned running shoes feature different technologies to keep the foot protected in the heel, midsole and forefoot. These shoes are intended for runners with a neutral, biomechanically efficient running motion, with no need for gait correction.

Performance

Performance shoes — also known as lightweight shoes — are targeted toward longtime, neutral runners with no need for injury protection. Performance running shoes are built for competitive racing or fast training and generally contain less padding to rid the shoe of any extra weight; they feature a minimal amount of support and cushioning, usually enough just to add comfort for long distances.

Shox

Shox is one of Nike's proprietary cushioning forms. Originally released in running, basketball and training shoes in 2001, Shox technology is based on the concept of columns of springs that compress at footstrike and rebound and propel the athlete as the foot moves forward through its gait. Shox columns are made of durable rubber, and running shoes can feature four, five or six Shox columns. Shox shoes are intended for neutral runners.

Entry Level/Low Mileage

Entry-level and low-mileage running shoes typically are low-priced and have a little bit of everything: a moderate level of cushioning, some support features for the heel and midfoot, and durable protection at the outsole and around the toe. Entry-level shoes feature little advanced technology, are not intended for high-mileage use and usually are introductory-priced shoes. Customers usually are first-time or occasional runners with a neutral profile, who need an

economical runner to get them started.

Trail

Trail shoes are created specifically for off-road runners. Outsoles are thicker, more durable and feature more traction. Many uppers have foot deflection plates and/or water protection. The foot often sits slightly lower to the ground than usual for stability and responsiveness in trail-running shoes, and they often have less cushioning than a road shoe because they're designed for softer surfaces. Trail shoes are quite a bit different than other types of running shoes: They're engineered to deliver advanced traction and durability, along with stability and overall foot protection. Trail runners usually include outsoles with additional traction features, gusseted tongues, foot deflection plates and some type of system to shield the foot from or to shed water.

Motion Control/Support

Motion control shoes (also called support shoes) are built on a straight last for runners who severely overpronate (roll their feet inward) and need maximum control and cushioning. These shoes are primarily intended for runners with extremely flat arches. Motion-control shoes generally are built on a stiffer last with more material in the midsole to prop up the arch. The heel counter usually is built up to lock the heel in place. Motion-control shoes generally are heavier but very durable.

Enhanced Cushioning

Running shoes with enhanced cushioning feature an advanced cushioning application, such as adidas' Bounce technology. These shoes are built to mitigate the constant pounding and provide some rebound as the runner moves through his or her stride.

Modern Classics

Considered more casual shoes than running shoes, Modern Classics are shoes built from a running shoe silhouette from the 1960s-2000s with updated materials (usually cushioning). These shoes are created for customers who want a retro look combined with today's cushioning.

Barefoot

Barefoot shoes, also known as minimalist shoes, are made for athletes looking for an experience similar to barefoot running — with the added protection of a minimal footwear shell to protect the sole. Barefoot shoes offer very little cushioning and are extremely light. Unlike standard running shoes, the outsole is stripped to a minimum so the heel is as close to the ground as possible. Because the upper and outsole material is much more flexible, these shoes offer a natural footstrike and almost a full range of motion. Barefoot shoes are intended for advanced runners with a neutral stride.