

The Ultimate Shoe Guide 2024

Understand the guide

Understand the guide and how to use it to find the best shoe for you and your walking or running journey.

Common Terms

Read and understand the terms to find what shoe features suits you and your running best.

Read the reviews

Match your features to the multiple shoes in the guide and see what we have to say about them.

Choose your shoe

The fun part!



created by

**FOOT &
ANKLE.**


JAMES SIEBER
RUN & STRENGTH COACH

Contents.

How to use the guide	3
About us	4
Shoe terms defined	5
Weight Drop Stack	6
Carbon Plates	7
Injury Corner	8
Shoe Categories	9
Shoe Recommendations	10
Daily Trainer	11
Speed + Tempo	13
Long Run	15
Race Day	17
Recovery	19

Who is this guide intended for?

This guide is intended for everyone - from first-time runners, all the way to 100km+ per week runners.


Our aim is for you to have the best understanding of shoes, to help make the best decisions!

How should you use the guide?

1. Understand the common terms and consider what you like in a shoe.
2. Pick your category or categories.
3. Read the reviews.

Each shoe will be rated out of five, based on: response, stability, stiffness and durability. For example:

Very responsive = 

Not responsive = 

What's different about this shoe guide?

This shoe guide is our best attempt to simplify a *very* complex topic.

We're combining shoe wearing experience, clinical experience and a lot of kilometres of running to bring the most current recommendations to you in an easy to understand format.

About us.

James Sieber.

All about a holistic approach, blending Run Coaching, Strength & Conditioning, Nutrition, Lifestyle Management, and Injury Prevention. James is here to help you thrive in the short run and grow in the long run. With a one-on-one coaching style, you'll discover the fun and satisfaction in consistent running. James' eye for every detail that makes running great, right down to the importance of the right pair of shoes.

Currently Daily Trainer: ON Cloudmonster

Tim Pargeter.

Director and Principal Podiatrist of Foot & Ankle. A Sports Podiatry clinic where the focus is on improving foot and ankle pain, injury and performance. With experience in foot and ankle pain, sports injury and surgery rehabilitation, Tim knows how much a shoe can impact on pain and injury management.

Current daily trainer: Nike Vomero 17

Common shoe terms, defined.

FIRM	A denser, more resilient midsole foam that adds stability and ground feel when running.
SOFT	A less dense, more cushioned midsole foam and feel that suits easy running and less ground feel at the expense of stability.
STIFF	How much flex there is in the shoe, specifically through the mid and forefoot where the toes bend.
ENERGY RETURN / REPSONSIVE	How much of the energy you put into the shoe with each step you get back.
ROCKER	A curving of the midsole, resembling a rocking chair, that aids in moving a runner through the gait cycle, specifically from heel to toe, creating a smoother transition and potentially improving running economy.
STABILITY	When a shoe provides a level of assistance, or support for your foot. Usually seen through the heel and/or arch.
NEUTRAL	A shoe that allows the foot to move without supplementary support. The shoe still forms a package that holds you securely without extra structure.
DURABILITY	The lifespan of a shoe. This is dependent on a lot of factors such as intended use, outsole compound and thickness, midsole compound and density, upper materials, and how you use it.
RESILIENCE	How well the midsole of the shoe, in particular, holds up across the duration of a singular run. Higher resilience is sought after from long run shoes, for example.

Weight.

The weight of a running shoe matters for several reasons, as it can significantly impact a runner's performance, comfort, and overall running experience. Both lighter weight and heavier weight shoe have benefits:

Lighter: efficiency, responsive, reduced fatigue, natural movement.

Heavier: cushioning, protection, stability, comfort.

LIGHT: <8oz/227g	MODERATE: 8oz - 10oz/227g - 283g	HEAVY: >10oz/283g
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Drop.

The drop, also known as the "heel drop", or "heel pitch" refers to the difference in height between the heel and the forefoot of the shoe. This measurement is usually given in millimetres. The majority of the shoes on the market have a heel drop.

ZERO: 0mm	LOW: 1-5mm	MEDIUM: 6-10mm	HIGH: >10mm
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Stack.

In the context of shoes, the term "stack" refers to the vertical thickness or height of the cushioning and sole components in the shoe. It's a measurement of the total amount of material between your foot and the ground when you're wearing the shoe.

LOW: <22mm	MEDIUM: 23-29mm	HIGH: 30-36mm	MAX: >36mm
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What about carbon plates?

Since the introduction of the Nike Vaporfly in 2017, the use of plates within shoes has skyrocketed. Why? Because they allow new foam compounds with higher energy return and resiliency to be used whilst giving the shoe more stiffness and snap to propel you throughout events, whilst minimising muscle breakdown. Primarily, there are two compounds used for plates in running shoes:

- Carbon Fibre
- Plastic (TPU/TPE)
- Glass Fibre

Carbon fibre offers more in terms of running economy and performance gains on the roads, however, suffers from less durability. Plastic, conversely, lasts longer and, as such, you see these in the training shoe companion to race day shoes, such as in the Saucony Endorphin Speed which is the training shoe for the carbon plated Saucony Endorphin Pro.

Within plated shoes, a wide variety of design and specific compound formulation are used across the brands, including how they react with that brands midsole compound and geometry. Brands are now creating plated shoes targeted at specific pace groups of runners and trying a variety to find the best fit is important.

Injury Corner.

Shoes are an important part of an injury management plan.

Here are some injury considerations to think about if you're suffering from any injuries:

Forefoot pain:

- Consider width options, the forefoot hates being compressed or squished in a tight shoe. D or 2E widths are 'wider' at the forefoot than the standard fit. Don't forget the shape of the toe box - shape around the toes is just as important.
- **TIP:** take the innersole out of the shoe and stand on it. This can show if the shoe shape matches your foot!
- Stiffer soled and rocker based shoes have been found to reduce metatarsal (forefoot bones) loading, and can aid in the reduction of forefoot loading and associated pain.

Rearfoot pain (Achilles, heel pain):

- Shoes with a higher heel pitch, generally reduces load through the calf and tendon complex which can aid in symptom reduction.

Instability

- Highly cushioned shoes might impact on your foot's ability to stabilise, so sticking to a firmer foam can be really helpful.

Always seek advice from a Health Professional.

Shoe categories.

Daily trainer.

This is the shoe you reach for most days, the jack-of-all-trades. Comes in many shapes and sizes and can do a variety of paces, with enough cushioning for longer runs, whilst able to pick the pace up when asked.

Speed + tempo.

Ready for your weekly workout, having a hit out at ParkRun? This is the shoe for you. These shoes love more energy being put in and they reward you sweetly for doing so. Yes, these shoes can be used on daily runs, but they are best saved for sessions.

Long run.

When your daily trainer isn't quite enough, the tempo shoe is too harsh, and race day shoes are too expensive to use all the time, this is when you reach for a long run shoe.

Encompassing some of the technology from race day shoes, long run shoes eat up the miles and leave you feeling fresher the next day.

Recovery.

Lots of cushion, perhaps some stability assistance, and all the comfort. Recovery day shoes are there to run slow and make you feel better at the end than at the start. They also work great as a daily trainer for runs under an hour and without needing to pick up the pace.

Race day.

All the work has been done and now you are looking for every advantage, regardless of where you are in the pack. These shoes have the most advanced technology, from foams to plates to geometry, helping you on the road to your goals.

Shoe Recommendations.

The following shoe recommendations have been created with a combination of surveys, personal and clinical experience.

Everyone will have their personal preferences and we always recommendation considering the following when choosing a shoe:

Comfort

This is vital. Choosing a shoe that you find comfortable on your foot is extremely important to allow

Purpose

Given the vast differences between current styles of shoes on the market, it's important to know what you'll be using the shoes for. For example, a recovery shoe may not be the best shoe for a speed + tempo session. The 'Shoe Categories' page will help with this.

Feature preference

Again, given the vast differences between current styles of shoes on the market, it's important have an idea of what you *like* in a shoe. For example, you may like a more cushioned shoe than a responsive shoe. Our recommendations rates each shoe on their features to help!

Shoe Recommendations.

Daily Trainer.

ASICS NOVABLAST 4

Quick Thoughts: The 3 was a great shoe. The 4 updates the few parts that needed doing: FFBlast+ Eco Midsole takes away some of the bounce yet adds stability and durability. Paired with a refined upper and increased outsole coverage, this is a great daily trainer.

Weight: 259g (M9) | 224g (W8)

Stack: 41.5mm/33.5mm (M) | 40.5 / 32.5 (W)

Drop: 8mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Saucony Triumph 21

Quick Thoughts: The 20 was a great shoe, and updated 21 is just as good. Saucony's workhorse shoe that combines a plush feel with a comfortable ride, built to go all day. The 21 update carries largely upper changes, with the well performing PWRUN+ foam remaining identical to the 20. The update does carry a slightly shallow toe box with a mild taper at the toes.

Weight: 279g (M9) | 250g (W8)

Stack: 37mm/27mm

Drop: 10mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Shoe Recommendations.

Daily Trainer.

ON Cloudmonster

Quick Thoughts: The mark of a hopeful new era for ON, the Cloudmonster offers a slightly firmer, lower stack, more responsive choice for a daily trainer. The rocker creates a fun and efficient running experience with enough durability for 3+ hour runs. It is a bit shallow in the toe box so consider a half size up if you have a deep foot.

Weight: 289g (M9) | 230g (W7)

Stack: 34mm/28mm

Drop: 6mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Nike Vomero 17

Quick Thoughts: The Vomero has had a big update - and it's great. If you want a plush feel with a good element of stability, this is a good choice. It carries a full length ZoomX foam, creating the plush, soft feel, ovetop of a stable base. It feels like a very balanced shoe. The toe box no longer has a narrow feel, to create really great comfort.

Weight: 300g (M10) | 243g (W8)

Stack: 39mm/29mm

Drop: 10mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Shoe Recommendations.

Long Run.

Asics Superblast

Quick Thoughts: When it comes to a long run shoe you would be hard pressed to find better. Un-plated, but with a dual density midsole that manages to be stable, responsive and energetic, holding up for the long haul, or really anything for that matter. It can take a few runs to break in, feeling quite hard to begin, and does come with a hefty price tag.

Weight: 239g (M9)

Stack: 45.5mm / 37.5mm

Drop: 8mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Adidas Boston 12

Quick Thoughts: Adidas has created an extremely versatile shoe. It is a shoe that can excel in all areas. And excel it does! It carries glass-fibre rods, to create stiffness and responsiveness with much greater durability than carbon fibre. The foam combination creates a firm yet comfortable, stable feel. The only downside being no cushioning around the heel cup, which does impact on the lockdown.

Weight: 267g (M9/W10)

Stack: 38mm / 31mm

Drop: 7mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Shoe Recommendations.

Long Run.

New Balance Supercomp Trainer V2

Quick Thoughts: One of the original Super Trainers, the SC Trainer V2 is plush. The upper is supportive and comfortable, perhaps a bit too built up for the long run and more like a daily trainer. The ride is bouncy, quite stable for a very soft foam, and feels able to pick the pace up.

Weight: 275g (M9) | 221 (W8)

Stack: 40mm / 34mm

Drop: 6mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Saucony Tempus

Quick Thoughts: Saucony have created a shoe that combines stability and performance. It is a shoe that appears to be inspired the Endorphin line. It uses it's PWBRUN PB foam in a structure that adds stability, but still allows performance through the paces. If you require a performance shoe that carries responsiveness and stability, this might be the shoe for you.

Weight: 254 g (M9) | 224 g (W8)

Stack: 36.5mm / 28.5mm

Drop: 8mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Shoe Recommendations.

Speed + Tempo.

Asics Magic Speed 3

Quick Thoughts: This is a fast tempo/racing shoe for those who want a moderately responsive ride and a carbon plate. Asics have splayed the foam to create a wide base to add an element of stability. The shoes carries a forefoot rocker, which when combined with the carbon plate creates a very snappy feel. Overall this is an affordable shoe option for those who still want a carbon-plated shoe combined with a bouncy feel.

Weight: 220g (M9) | 186 g (W8)

Stack: 36mm / 29mm

Drop: 7mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Saucony Endorphin Speed 3

Quick Thoughts: The Endorphin Speed set the expectation for a Super Shoe partner, the training shoe. The 3 is a bit more stable and less aggressive than the 2 which is welcomed by some, not by others. The nylon plate is responsive without being too stiff, and paired with the PWRRUN PB foam it has a lovely, durable ride. One main concern, though, is the lifespan of the shoe, with the outsole and foam breaking down earlier than competitors.

Weight: 239g (M9)

Stack: 45.5 mm / 37.5 mm

Drop: 8mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Shoe Recommendations.

Speed + Tempo.

Hoka Mach X

Quick Thoughts: A new addition for HOKA, taking the magic of the Mach X and adding a plate. With the typical narrow HOKA fit, the dual density midsole helps create a stable ride with a soft underfoot experience. That said, the Pebax plate combined with the EVA bottom layer does take the excitement away from the PEBA top layer and the lovely rocker geometry. Especially if you like a narrower fit, this is a good shoe to try.

Weight: 266g (M9) | 227g (W8)

Stack: 39mm / 34mm

Drop: 5mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Adidas Takumi Sen 10

Quick Thoughts: The Takumi Sen can be described as a snappy track shoe with a lean midsole. This shoe is built for the 5k-10k, but could be pushed to a half marathon. It has a mildly cushioned midsole, which may not provide enough foam to work as a daily trainer shoe, but certainly the shorter, quicker speed sessions. As with the current Adizero line, this shoe has a minimally cushioned heel which may impact on comfort and lockdown.

Weight: 198g (M9) | 167g (W8)

Stack: 33mm / 27mm

Drop: 6mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Shoe Recommendations.

Race Day.

Nike Vaporfly 3

Quick Thoughts: I mean, Nike took the original super shoe and made it even better. Light, with a very minimal yet well fitting upper, you feel “racey” just putting the shoe on. Once moving, the shoe disappears on your foot. With a slightly reduced outsole thickness, the Vaporfly 3 propels you through the stride whilst giving a slightly wider forefoot than previous models making it more stable.

Weight: 184 g (M9) | 159 g (W8)

Stack: 38mm/30mm

Drop: 8mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Saucony Endorphin Pro 3

Quick Thoughts: One of the most accessible super shoes, the Pro 3 is extremely soft and bouncy, with an S-shaped carbon fibre plate that makes this a great race day shoe. On longer runs, the plate can get a bit hard underfoot as the foam loses life, and the outsole thickness, which is great for getting a lot of kms on the shoe, is maybe too much for this category.

Weight: 204g (M9) | 176g (W8)

Stack: 39.5 mm / 31.5 mm

Drop: 8mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Shoe Recommendations.

Race Day.

Adidas Adizero Pro 3

Quick Thoughts: Utilising a unique rod design, as opposed to a carbon plate, the Pro 3 is intended to mould to the metatarsals, with a pretzel style construction under the heel. After widening the heel and midfoot from the Pro 2, this feels as stable as any other race day shoe and combined with an excellent Continental outsole is great in many conditions. The upper, although light and breathable, and is hard to get a good lockdown. The shoe runs narrow so consider a half size down, although not if you have a slightly wide foot.

Weight: 215 g (M9/W11 unisex sizing)

Stack: 39.5mm/33 mm

Drop: 6.5mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Hoka Rocket X 2

Quick Thoughts: Until now, Hoka hasn't had a race day shoe worth buying. The Rocket X 2 changes this by creating a slightly firmer race day shoe that has excellent bounce off the toe. A 5mm drop with an aggressive rocker works well at a variety of speeds whilst the upper, albeit a bit too minimal around the heel, fits extremely well. For anyone looking for a firmer race day option, but not as much as the Saucony Endorphin Elite, this is your shoe.

Weight: 212 g (M9/W10.5 Unisex sizing)

Stack: 36mm/31mm

Drop: 5mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Shoe Recommendations. Race Day.

New Balance 1080 V13

Quick Thoughts: New Balance's premium cushion shoe has great space around the toe box, and a soft yet bouncy under foot feel. The V13 has made the forefoot slightly stiffer than the V12 with a tread upgrade. This is a great option for a wider foot type, and makes for a great recovery run or walking shoe based on the foam combination. Be wary running any longer than 60 minutes, as you may notice foam fatigue.

Weight: 262 g (M9) | 206 g (W8)

Stack: 37mm / 31mm

Drop: 6mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Asics Gel Nimbus 26

Quick Thoughts: Asics premium cushioned shoe with a maximal stack height and moderate forefoot rocker. The knit upper is roomy around the toes to allow for great comfort and also has a good lock down around the heel with a high amount of padding. The cushioning and stability combination works as a great option for someone who has to be on their feet all day.

Weight: 303 g (M9) | 261 g (W8)

Stack: 41.5mm/33.5 mm (M) | 40.5mm/32.5 mm (W)

Drop: 8mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Shoe Recommendations.

Race Day.

Hoka Clifton 9

Quick Thoughts: This is Hoka's neutral workhorse shoe. It provides maximal cushion with Hoka's usual forefoot rocker feel. It carries all day comfort, but still maintains it's very lightweight feel. This shoe does have a lot of cross over features of a daily trainer / recovery shoe. The foam combination allows for comfort and stability, and is a shoe people are able to wear all day.

Weight: 248g (M9) | 205g (W8)
Stack: 32mm/27mm (M) | 29mm/24mm (W)
Drop: 5mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



Nike Invincible 3

Quick Thoughts: The Invincible 3 carries Nike's racing line of ZoomX foam, with the addition of a stability element. This combination allows for a soft yet responsive underfoot feeling. It has a very wide base platform that carries good stability for those easy recovery runs. Nike has added a width option to allow for a wider foot and gives the best chance to find great comfort.

Weight: 300g (M9) | 258g (W8)
Stack: 40mm/31mm
Drop: 9mm

Responsive:



Stable:



Stiff:



Durability:



**If you have any questions, feel
free to reach out**

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