

# THE SHOE UPDATE

2023



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## The Shoe Update 2023

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## **Commentary**

As always, The Shoe Update represents our effort to look at footwear through a more pathological and problem-solving lens. It strives to be much more than a simple review of what's new on the market this season.

We hope to answer some tough questions like:

-What shoes are considered 'go to' models when trying to manage foot related issues as part of a multidisciplinary approach to patient care?

-How can shoes be part of my patient's recovery?

-How can shoes help keep my customers stay active and therefore healthier?

Enjoy the reading and please call any time with questions or even to start a lively debate. There is no right and wrong when it comes to shoes... there's just what works! So, let's try and find the answers together and keep people moving ahead.

Let's make 2023 a good one!

Thank you,

The FitFirst and LadySport Team

# **Shoe Construction**

## *Terminology and Definitions*

### ***Motion Control***

To be deemed worthy of the term motion control, the shoe should have at least six of the following ten features:

- Thermoplastic Heel Counter
- Medial Midsole Plug
- Torsional Rigidity
- Straight Last
- Motion Control Collar
- External Arch Support
- Medial Strapping/Upper
- Broad Sole Plate
- Firm Midsole
- Heel Counter Medial Extension

Numbers (1), (2), and (3) are virtual necessities to classify a shoe as "motion control". The label of motion control is difficult to achieve, and rarely given to any shoe other than a running shoe. The reason is because running shoes are designed to take issue with the biomechanical peculiarities of the heel-toe gait pattern under high impact. Problems resulting from misalignment due to excessive pronation during this gait pattern are well-documented (ex. patella-femoral syndrome, plantar fasciitis, etc.). Shoe designers and biomechanists are very conscious of foot type when building these shoes, so motion control is usually front and center.

With cross-trainers, tennis shoes, basketball shoes, and others, sport specific attributes are more important to the designer than are the mechanical or foot specific features. Therefore, true motion control is a rare commodity outside of the running market. More pronation control walkers and running oriented cross-trainers will likely be introduced in the near future as the population ages, and consumers become more cerebral about even the most recreational of purchases: their sneakers.

## ***Stability***

We define stability as a relatively straight lasted shoe that has many of the qualities of a motion control shoe, with torsional rigidity, a strong heel counter and firm midsole. Where it differs is that it is less pronounced in its medial posting. Instead of a plastic plug or post, it has only dense medial foam. In other words, a pronation control shoe without the exclamation mark! The designers clearly have the excessive pronator in mind, but are trying to create a nicer ride without too much control. Some feel that the chance for lateral midsole collapse is reduced because the difference in density of the midsole, from medial to lateral, is less than in the classic motion control shoe.

Many orthotic providers are reluctant to put their orthotics in shoes with medial posting. The denser medial column may influence the correction of the orthotic, and with extended wear, cause premature collapse of the lateral rear midsole. This fear of lateral collapse may be as much from design influences on the rear-foot, aimed at slowing the rate of pronation as from the medial posting.

## ***Neutral Supportive***

In this style, the last shape and firmness of the lateral midsole column is similar to that found in most stability shoes. The difference here is there is no dense medial midsole material of any kind. The entire midsole is quite firm, to act as a supportive foundation for an orthotic or the impact of a heavier/harder heel strike.

Neutral supportive is the most common referral category for orthotics, as the platform is the same on both sides. One thing to keep in mind is that if the lateral column is soft, then the shoe may collapse to the outside, regardless of the presence of any denser medial posting. Firm lateral columns made of dense EVA or, even better, polyurethane may be the answer. So, if the orthotic provider needs a little extra from the shoe some medial posting in the right shoe may prove useful. Just ask that the lateral midsole be appropriately firm to last the life of the shoe.

## ***Neutral Cushion***

Slightly more curve lasted, but not necessarily more torsionally flexible. The midsole is softer than a neutral supportive shoe and has a more squishy, bouncy ride. An orthotic wearer who has some shock attenuation issues may do better here than in a neutral supportive model.

### ***Flexible and Ultra Cushioned***

A forgotten category! It seems that torsional flexibility in the midfoot and marshmallow soft midsoles are a thing of the past, possibly because designers think that torsional flexibility does not necessarily help a rigid cavus foot to pronate. Therefore, they support it into the midfoot and give it lots of shock attenuation. That would mean one should fit that cavus foot in a standard cushion shoe above.

### ***Minimalist Running***

A minimalist running shoe has a combination of features that differentiate it from a traditional runner.

- The offset, or drop, is less than 8 mm. Drops are usually 4-8 mm, but can be as low as 0 mm.
- Lightweight – These shoes are lighter weight, much of that due to the reduction in the midsole.

### ***Minimalist (Natural)***

This minimalist category is defined by its torsional flexibility and lack of supportive upper. The midsole flexes in all planes, and the heel counter is often non-existent.

### ***Minimalist (Traditional)***

This minimalist category is defined by its traditional torsional rigidity and supportive upper. The midsole doesn't flex in all planes and the heel counter is firm.

### ***Last Type***

The last is the mold around which the shoe is made. It influences many things about the shoe including, most importantly, the fit and support. A shoe is designed around a last just like a dress is designed around a pattern. The last is the culmination of all the designer's wants and needs with respect to the fit of the shoe. Now depending on the materials chosen and the manufacturing process, the end result may or may not reflect the last mandate, but when the same mold is used there is a greater chance of consistency.

Straight lasted shoes generally provide superior support for the pes planus, or flatter foot, a common excessive pronator.

The curved last is often associated with the cavus, or high rigid arched foot, and can commonly be sculpted or dished away under the long arch, making the shoe torsionally more flexible.

Lasts that are neither very straight, nor very curved can be denoted semi-curved (SC), as even the straightest of the straight lasts used in athletic shoes have a curve of approximately 8 degrees.

### ***Board Last, Slip Last & Strobel Last***

When manufacturing a shoe, there are 3 basic ways to laminate the upper to the midsole or foamy base of the shoe:

- **Board lasting** is where the sides of the upper of the shoe are tucked under a board and the board is glued to the midsole holding the two together. This board usually stops just before the metatarsals. From here the sides of the upper are joined together, sewn and glued down. The board creates increased torsional rigidity in the rearfoot with maximum flexibility in the forefoot.
- **Slip lasting** is what occurred in the forefoot of example (1). The upper is sewn together as one piece from heel to toe; negating the need for a board to bind the sides of the upper. This moccasin or slip lasting is used in some shoes from heel to toe to increase flexibility and aid in achieving a snug contoured fit to the foot.
- **Strobel lasting** is now the most popular way to construct an upper. It is really a modification of the slip last. It's like sewing a flat insole around its outer edge to the rest of the upper. The midsole sits on this sole-shaped piece of material. Companies are using midsole materials for this base piece to get enhanced cushioning in the shoe.

### ***Combination Lasting***

A method of lasting where the forefoot is slip lasted and the rearfoot is board lasted. This allows for flexibility in the forefoot and extra support in the rearfoot. Combination lasting is mostly used to add torsional rigidity in shoes. In the charts we say "board lasting" as a short form for combination pronators.

### ***Midsole***

The midsole is the area between the upper and the outsole of the shoe. Usually made of EVA pre-compressed foam or polyurethane, this is where all the shock-absorbing bells and whistles are housed. Air bags, hexalite gel, etc., along with the foam, helps to attenuate the shock while its firmness or softness dictates the shoe's rating for stability, rigidity and often its motion



control capabilities. It is also here that densities of material are varied to increase medial control and forefoot flexibility depending on the durometer, or firmness, of the material that is chosen and placed in key areas of the shoe.

### ***Dual Density Midsole***

A firmer density of EVA located on the medial side of the midsole which guards against premature medial midsole breakdown, common to excessive pronators.

### ***Medial Post***

Lodged into the medial, or inside aspect, side of the midsole are firm plastic or urethane plugs that keep the foams from collapsing under the extra pressure exerted by excessive pronation. In some cases, this plug is an integral part of the heel counter and acts as a restrictive post and a control mechanism for rearfoot pronation. In other cases, the post is simply a firmer, higher density material on the medial aspect of the shoe. Many posts are now incorporated as part of the *midfoot shank* (see below) and extend into the medial midsole. Posts are rarely found in the forefoot.

### ***Midfoot Shanks***

Companies have a variety of proprietary names for their midfoot shanks, which separate the forefoot from the rearfoot of the shoe. It allows the designer to cut away part of the midsole, and replace it with a hard, lightweight hytrel plastic, reducing the weight of the shoe, while enhancing torsional rigidity. Asics uses two *trusstic* plates, with a space between them, so that the midstance and foot sink towards the ground, enhancing the windlass effect of the shoe (See the Asics website for more info on the *Space Trusstic System*).

### ***Exceptional Heel Counter***

The formed thermoplastic cup inside the heel portion of the upper of the shoe is the most important structural part of any piece of footwear. All control begins and ends with this feature. Some models have plastic or molded collars added externally to the heel counter that reinforce it and/or hook into the medial posts; these are deemed worthy of the label exceptional! Rarely does a running shoe make it on the wall without this feature. Some are bombproof, but most are very good.

### ***Decoupled Heel***

One of the early design efforts to slow the rate of pronation was to put a slice through the outsole and a bit of the midsole of a runner at an acute angle to allow the heel to decouple upon heel strike, thus reducing the lever arm at that moment. The outsole and midsole would widen out, creating less lateral collapse of the midsole, and a broader base of support. This was a revolutionary feature which, though it has evolved, is around in some form in all technical running models. Adidas has taken the concept the furthest by almost hinging this section so that it truly decouples at heel strike.

### ***Foot Bed***

This term refers to the insole of the shoe, which, though made with numerous types of materials, essentially acts as a comfortable liner for the shoe. Rarely does it enhance support, and it is often replaced by an off-the-shelf arch support or a custom orthotic. Almost all of the better athletic shoes have this removable insert. Manufacturers should dedicate more time and money to making this a useful, supportive accessory.

### ***Foot Frame/Cupsole***

In shoes which are designed for court or lateral activity, the midsole is molded up the side of the foot at key stress areas to aid in keeping the foot over the sole plate, decreasing the risk of inversion sprain and lateral breakdown of the shoe. The feature is found in court shoes (when made properly) and in cross-trainers.

### ***Saddle***

This is the area of the upper that wraps the arch, the portion of the shoe that the eyelets are cut into. Often the company logo is placed here and sewn in such a way to enhance the midfoot support of the shoe. Plastics are sometimes used to add substance to this region, but at the cost of fit. Some are using cables, hooked into the eyelets to gain support as the shoe is laced up.

### ***Toe Spring***

The amount of upward tilt of the toe of the shoe, internally defined by the last used to create that shoe. The greater the toe spring of the shoe, the more the toes are dorsiflexed. The toe spring is often part of the overall *rocker profile* (see definition below) of the shoe.

### ***Rocker/Rocker Profile***

The rocker profile of a shoe is a combination of rocker tapering and toe spring. This is the usual term used to describe most off-the-shelf running and walking shoes.

The most popular prescription right now is for a stiff rocker soled shoe to help manage many forms of metatarsalgia. Many types of athletic designs increase the “rocker profile” or “toe spring” of the shoe and the toe of the shoe often appears slightly “turned up”. When this “rocker profile” is combined with a lack of flexibility, a rocker sole effect is often achieved. True rocker soles are internally flat and have a rocker that is apexed in the forefoot. Some shoes have a heel/toe rocker whose shape is much like that of a rocking horse.

In these shoe designs, the toes sit in a dorsi-flexed position when the foot is bearing weight. This is a very useful strategy for limiting movement at the metatarsals and can act like a splint for the forefoot, while letting the individual ambulate normally.

The rocker is defined by the amount of taper in the midsole. Forefoot rocker is made by tapering the midsole at the ball of the foot and thinning it out distally. The apex of the rocker can be set at different points, measured as a percentage of the length of the shoe. A forefoot rocker set at 60% of the length from heel to toe will affect the pressure relief at the metatarsals differently than one set at 80%, or closer to the toe of the shoe. The same principle applies to rear foot rockers in reverse, and effects different biomechanics.

### ***Rocker Profile***

The rocker profile of a shoe is a combination of rocker tapering and toe spring. This is the usual term used to describe most off-the-shelf running and walking shoes.

### ***Drop***

The drop of a shoe is the difference in height of the between the heel and the ball of the foot.

### ***Ramp angle***

The ramp angle of a shoe is the angle that the shoe pitches forward from heel to toe.

### ***Stack Height***

The stack height of a shoe is the height from the bottom of the shoe sole to the bottom of the foot in the shoe. That is, the addition of the thickness of the outer sole, midsole, and insole.

### ***Stretchable Uppers***

Traditional upper materials like leather and synthetic leathers, which have a limited amount of give, are being combined with 4 way stretchable materials, including Lycra and spandex, to help accommodate foot abnormalities (bunions, hammer toes, claw toes, etc.). XSensible footwear combines thin leather or suede skins with a combination of Lycra and spandex to create orthopedic magic in a dress casual shoe. Athletic suppliers are also using stretchable material insets to accommodate protruding Taylor's bunions. Some orthopaedic companies like Propet, Pedor, and P.W. Minor are making shoes with completely elastic toe boxes, which are useful for fitting individuals with diabetes or arthritic feet.

### ***Hokas and "Maximalism"***

Developed by a European trail runner, this platform "moonboot" running shoe is winning trail runs all over Europe. Its application here is far more often as an orthopedic device to manage metatarsalgia in the general population. The stiff rockered thick sole provides an extremely light weight and cushioned base that is stable and supportive. By splinting the forefoot there is minimal flex at the MT heads and relief for the neuroma, hallux rigidus, and rheumatoid arthritis sufferer. Goofy looking, but it can put a smile on the face of the crankiest foot!

### ***Skeletal Heel Counter***

In some cases, heel counters are being minimized by removing some of the girth of the counter leaving only a skeletal framework to support the rearfoot. This is done primarily to reduce weight, and promoted as being just as strong as the traditional "bomb proof" heel counters celebrated for their control of rearfoot motion. You be the judge!

### ***Minimalism***

The barefoot movement created a visceral response by the athletic shoe manufacturers to develop a "new" category of shoes called "minimalist" footwear!

Unlike the traditional jogging shoe which has a fairly consistent offset of 8-12mm, minimalist shoe grades are anywhere from 0 mm to 6 mm. The shoe heights from the ground are as varied as the number of styles. The variety of heel heights can be useful as long as one knows what they are putting their feet into.

The idea behind wearing “less shoe” is the conventional running shoe and its progressive pronation control systems are causing more harm than good. Feet were made to move freely and are therefore stronger and more efficient when left unshod. With the minimalist shoe, the gait returns to a more natural midfoot strike and many injuries are avoided. Which injuries, and who exactly are candidates for this strategy is the million-dollar question!

Most minimalist shoes are recommended as an adjunct to your traditional footwear, allowing the athlete an opportunity to exercise the foot, increase proprioception, and build intrinsic strength. It is suggested to initially use it as a training tool for your feet. You are to introduce it gradually and see if indeed “less” is “more”. So far, a lack of education and compliance has been the biggest hurdle, but with a well-designed strategy and the right amount of minimalism it can have a positive benefit. There are two main categories of minimalist shoes, Tradition and Barefoot.

- **Traditional Minimalism:** Some shoes have the traditional heel counter support and torsional rigidity; they are just thinner and more “minimal” in that respect. These shoes are a throwback to the old racing & training shoes of the late ‘70s. Running with an athletic midfoot strike has always been the ideal gait pattern for this style of footwear. One should be aware of the reduced heel height and possible extra strain on the Achilles and gastroc/soleus.
- **Barefoot Minimalism:** This type of minimalist shoe is, in the same design way, attempting to create more freedom of movement by minimizing the amount of support in the shoe. This is usually done by all but eliminating a heel counter and designing the midsole/outsole to be torsionally flexible, thus mimicking a shoeless scenario. The midsole thickness and heel grade can vary significantly, but are usually relatively low profile.

# Injury Management

What Shoe Is Right for You

( )=Order of preference

(1)-Asics Glideride (2)-Asics Evoride	-Early-stage stiff rocker	-Ankle fusion -Ankle replacement -Ankle OA -Tight achilles -Limited ankle flexion
(1)-Hoka Bondi (2)-Hoka Clifton (3)-NB More 840 (4)-Saucony Endorphin Shift (5)-Hoka Stinson (6)-Hoka Challenger (7)-Hoka Speedgoat Trail (8)-Hoka Rocket X (9)-Hoka Light hikers (10)-Asics Trabuco Max	-Stiff rocker	-Hallux rigidus/limitus -Metatarsalgia -Plantar fasciitis
(1)-Basketball Models (2)-Most Tennis Models	-Cupsoling (the midsole and/or outsole wraps up the side of the upper)	-Lateral torque activities -Athletic inversion sprains.
(1)-Brooks Ariel (2)-Mizuno Horizon	-Straight last -Wide sole plate -Medial post	-Post tib dysfunction -Extreme heel varus -Adult acquired flat foot
(1)-Brooks Dyad (2)-NB 840 (3)-Saucony Echelon	-Straight last -Wide sole plate -Neutral midsole	-Excellent for more substantial orthotics -Pes planus
(1)-Brooks Ghost (2)-Mizuno Wave Rider	-High heel offset -Cushion	-Cavus foot -Equinus -Forefoot off-loading when standing

(1)-Propet Bianca Velcro Oxford (2)-Propet Sylvie (3)-Most Road Runners with Engineered Mesh (Especially NB and Brooks) Available in Wide Fittings (4)-Propet Cushion Foot Slipper (velcro) (5)-Portofino Stretch Leather Oxford (velcro or lace)	-Seamless toe box or stretch elastic toe box -Wide fittings or extra depth	-Bunion in (1 <sup>st</sup> MTPJ) -Tailors Bunion/Bonionette -Hammer/Claw toes -Diabetic foot
(2)-Earth Casuals and Sandals	-Shoes with built in arch support	-Longitudinal arch and enhanced midfoot support

## Motion Control Running Shoes

Major medial enhancement for the excessive pronator.

Brand	Model	Price	Dense Medial Side	Forefoot Flexibility	Stack Height	Drop/Offset	Waterproof option	Ladies	Men	Available at LadySport	Available at FitFirst Footwear	Width Sizing Available	Description
Brooks	Ariel	\$200	Extensive	Moderate	29/17	12mm	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	Classic bomb proof pronation control shoe. Excellent fav PTTD.
Mizuno	Horizon 6	\$200	Extensive	Firm	38/30	8mm	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	Very firm shoe and one of few in this select wide based orthotic friendly category.

## Stability Running Shoes

Guards against some excessive pronation/ moderate medial enhancement by way of some dense medial midsole foam.

Brand	Model	Price	Dense Medial Side	Forefoot Flexibility	Stack Height	Drop/Offset	Waterproof option	Ladies	Men	Available at LadySport	Available at FitFirst Footwear	Width Sizing Available	Description
Asics	GT 2000-11	\$170	Slight	Moderate	22/14	10 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The benchmark shoe in the stability category. It seems that the fit of this classic model is finally getting back to it's original wonderful seamless fit
Asics	Kayano 29	\$220	Slight	Flexible	24/14	Womens: 13 mm Mens: 10 mm	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Continuing with their 13 mm heel offset this highly cushioned model is excellent for the CAVUS foot
Brooks	Glycerine 20 GTS	\$200	Dense	Moderate	34/24	10mm	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A highly cushioned version of the classic Adrenaline with the same guidrails for pronation support.
Brooks	Adrenaline 22 GTS	\$180	Dense rail	Moderate	28.5/16.5	12 mm	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The guiderail system for pronation control seems to be a solid modernization of traditional medial posting.
Mizuno	Wave Inspire 18	\$185	-	Flexible	37.5/25.5	12 mm	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	This shoe is a constant reminder of how Mizuno does not try to reinvent the wheel each time; rather, they make minor tweaks to improve key styles. This allows an easy transition from one shoe to the next.
New Balance	WW860v13	\$180	Slight	Moderate	27/17	10 mm	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	As with many of the shoes the heel design is sleeker but manages to maintain the great fit of this classic model.
Nike	Infinity React 2	\$210	-	Moderate	33/24	9 mm	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Building off the re-imagination in stability in version one. Version 2 offers a comfier fitting upper and traditiuon tounge enclosure. In testing runners with this shoe were less prone to injury.
Saucony	Guide 16	\$180	Slight	Moderate	35/27	8mm	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	We are pretty keen on this update with a better arch fit and new posting system for light stability

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## Neutral Supportive Running Shoes

Ideal for orthotic providers who want a neutral but firm platform for an orthotic device,

Brand	Model	Price	Midsole	Sole Plate width	Forefoot Flexibility	Stack Height	Drop/ Offset	Waterproof option	Ladies	Men	Available at LadySport	Available at FitFirst Footwear	Width Sizing Available	Description
Brooks	Dyad 11	\$160	Firm	Wide	Moderate	29/19	10 mm	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The newly designed seamless toe box is more accommodative... combine this with a great heel fit and we have something special.
New Balance	W840F	\$180	Firm	Wide	Stiff	33/29	4 mm	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A new entry of an old classic that changes from a low profile traditional shoe to a maximal shoe. Big change here check out our video on the website for a full review.
Saucony	Echelon 9	\$170	Firm	Wide	Moderate	35/27	8 mm	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A classic in the neutral supportive category its wide platform and lightweight upper make it excellent for all kinds forefoot pathologies

## Cushion Running Shoes

For the neutral to cavus foot that requires exceptional cushioning and a softer ride.

Brand	Model	Price	Midsole	Sole Plate width	Forefoot Flexibility	Stack Height	Drop/ Offset	Ladies	Men	Available at LadySport	Available at FitFirst Footwear	Width Sizing Available	Description
Asics	Cumulus 25	\$170	Soft	Medium	Moderate	23/15	10 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	They are trying in getting back to their traditional fit this is a good update in the neutral category.
Asics	Cumulus 25 GTX	\$210	Soft	Medium	Moderate	W: 36.5/28.5 M: 37.5/29.5	8 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Same as above with a waterproof membrane. This makes a shoe a touch less forgiving in the forefoot.
Asics	Nimbus 25	\$210	Soft	Mod- Wide	Moderate	28/15	Women13 mm Men10mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Same as above with a waterproof membrane. This makes a shoe a touch less forgiving in the forefoot.
Brooks	Ghost 16	\$180	Firm	Wide Heel and Forefoot	Moderate	24/12	12 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Available in narrow medium in wide this seamless toe Box with a narrow heel fit is one of the best fitting models year to year.
Brooks	Ghost 15 GTX	\$195	Firm	Wide Heel and Forefoot	Moderate	29/17	12 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Same as the shoe above except a waterproof mambrane.
Brooks	Glycerin 20	\$200	Soft	Medium	Stiff	38/28	10 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	This has become a best seller... a classic with a narrow heel and seamless forefoot fit
Mizuno	Wave Rider 27	\$180	Moderate	Moderate	Flexible	38.5/26.5	12 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	An excellent update with a seamless upper and deep and narrow heel fit.
Mizuno	Wave Rider GTX	\$200	Moderate	Moderate	Flexible	36.5/24.5	12 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Same as the shoe above except a waterproof membrane. This can make the shoe a touch less forgiving in the forefoot.
New Balance	W880v13 /also in GTX	\$180 \$210	Soft	Medium	Moderate	32/22	10 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	This shoe is our store's top seller... A fairly significant change in structure and look relative to the previous model but it is still a top fit performer.

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New Balance	W1080v12	\$200	Firm	Wide forefoot	Moderate	36/28	8 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Wide base for excellent stability, firm forefoot flex and a seamless toebox. Update significant changes from the previous model, the extremely stretchy toe box will be ideal for those with hammer toes and bunions. Very soft cushioning.
Nike	Pegasus 40 /also in WP	\$170\$210	Soft	Moderate	Stiff	33/23	10 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	A narrowish toe box fitting with aerodynamic styling, classic for a one with good biomechanics.
On	CloudFlyer 4	\$210	Soft	Medium	Moderate	28/17	11mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	An extremely soft ride with above average forefoot stability.
On	CloudStratus	\$230	Soft	Medium	Firm	26/20	6 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Suprisingly well cushioned, thick clouds and a moderately stiff frame.
Saucony	Triumph 19	\$200	Firm	Narrow Midfoot	Stiff	32.5/24.5	8 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A significant styling change with a new highly padded heel collar excellent for those with sore Achilles and issues with rearfoot upper fits.
Saucony	Ride 15	\$180	Firm	Medium wide	Flexible	35/27	8 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Like above the padded and smooth color may be useful this shoe also as excellent forefoot cushioning

## Walking Shoes

People walk in all kinds of shoes from athletic to casual. These shoes are specifically marketed towards the walker. They are chosen for their support and ability to accommodate an orthotic.

Brand	Model	Price	Type	Rocker	Ladies	Men	Available at LadySport	Available at FitFirst Footwear	Width Sizing Available	Description
New Balance	WW928V3	\$190	Support	Very	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	This model changes every half decade or so it remains a standard for firm, slightly rockered supportive every day walking shoe, with a deep accommodative framework for most orthotics.
Saucony	Grid Integrity Walker 3	\$130	Neutral	Very	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Now they are only making narrows in white, which is a bit of a disappointment to the lightweight walker, available in three other withs and two other colours as well.

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## Trail Running Shoes

Running shoes that are made specifically for off road running.

Brand	Model	Price	Type	Stack Height	Drop/ Offset	Ladies	Men	Available at LadySport	Available at FitFirst Footwear	Width Sizing Available	Description
Asics	Fuji Trabuco 10	\$160	Neutral	19/11	8 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	A shoe with great heritage – it is neutral and very functional on trail and road
Asics	Fuji Trabuco 10 GTX	\$210	Neutral	19/11	8 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Waterproof version of the shoe above and has a relatively stiff forefoot flex
Asics	Sonoma 7 GTX	\$130	Neutral	19/11	8 mm	✓	✓	✓	-	-	The most affordable of the Gore-Tex running models. This one is for the trail slimfit. Exellent value.
Brooks	Caldera 6	\$160	Neutral	32/28	4 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Lower stack height than Hoka, but it delivers many of the same rocker applications.
Brooks	Cascadia 17 GTX	\$175	Neutral	26/18	10 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	The upper is a bit stiff affecting the first feel, but otherwise a durable run/hike option
Hoka	Speedgoat 5 /also in GTX	\$200	Neutral	30/26	4 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	A slimmer base than the Stinson... it is less suited for the problem of fit but great for unloading the forefoot of a healthy shaped foot.
On	Cloudventure /also in WP	\$220	Neutral	26/20	6 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	The newest version has a firmer upper and is a bit less accommodative for orthopedics... but with the stiff forefoot and great lug outsole it performs on the trail.
Saucony	Peregrine 12 /also in GTX	\$160	Neutral	28/24	4 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Not for the pronator, it does have a relatively stiff flex. Comes in waterproof as well, very light for the support it offers.
Saucony	Excursion TR16 /also in GTX	\$120 \$160	Neutral	31/23	8mm	✓	-	✓	-	✓	The price is rising but it's still a very affordable, deep fitting, waterproof trail shoe.
New Balance	NB Hierro v7 /also in GTX	\$190 \$220	Neutral	36/28	8 mm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Available in wide fitting and supstantial tread makes it an exellent slightly stiffer off road shoe to accomodate wide foot issues
New Balance	More Trail V2	\$190	Neutral	38/34	4 mm	✓	-	✓	-	✓	Slightly narrow fit than the V2 road. Excellent traction and a stiff rocker.

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## Court, Cross-training and Fitness Shoes

Styles work for individuals with or without orthotic devices.

Brand	Model	Price	Sport	Good for Tennis	Gym use	Volleyball	Cross-Training	Pickleball	Ladies	Men	Available at LadySport	Available at FitFirst Footwear	Width Sizing Available	Description
Asics	Gel Game 8	\$120	Tennis	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Marked as a pickleball shoe it is a lighter weight less expensive tennis shoe that does well on both indoor and outdoor courts.
Asics	Resolution 8	\$180	Tennis	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Consistently a superior fit for the narrow-ish foot and a real players shoe.
Asics	Tactic	\$120	V-Ball/ Xtrain	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	Marketed as a volleyball shoe and makes an excellent pickleball shoe for indoor use on the gym floor. Could easily have been marketed as a cross training shoe.
Asics	Challenger 13	\$140	Tennis	✓	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	-	-	The mesh toe box makes it a great choice for individuals with hammer toes. Also is great for breathability.
Columbia	Drainmaker	\$100	Aqua	-	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	✓	-	A nice alternative to the Ryka for water aerobics and better for outdoor water sports.
Nike	Metcon 6	\$145	X-train	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Lower profile than above model. Nice for plyometrics and CrossFit.
New Balance	WC806	\$150	Tennis	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	✓	Width sizes are useful here and it is a consistent line to go back to.
Kswiss	Express Light	\$165	Pickleball	-	-	-	-	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	-	Breathable upper with great lateral support with indoor/ outdoor sole.
Kswiss	Big Shot	\$140	Tennis	✓	-	-	-	-	✓	-	✓	-	-	Heavy leather upper with excellent forefoot lateral support.
Str/ke	New	\$160-\$170	Trainer	-	✓	✓	✓	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	This new brand originated for CrossFit, but excellent for all activities. It is a wide based traditional minimalist shoe with a 4mm offset.

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## Orthopedic Shoes/Slides/Slippers

Styles work for individuals with or without orthotic devices.

Brand	Model	Price	Type	Removable Insole	Closure	Stretch Elastic	Forefoot Flexibility	Rocker	Rearfoot Depth	Torsional Rigidity	Width Sizes Available	Description
Earth	Ezra	\$90	Slide	✓	Velcro/Slip-on	-	Flexible	-	N/A	Firm	-	Cushioned insole. Keeps the feet warm.
Hoka	Ora Recovery	\$80	Slip on	✓	Elastic	✓	Stiff	✓	N/A	Firm	-	Stiff rocker, after workout or house slipper not a maximalist base.
Merrell	Encore Slides	\$130	Casual	✓	Slip-on	-	Moderate	Moderate	N/A	Flexible	-	Slides come in both leather and mesh upper. Excellent for around the house, and take orthotics. A cute shoe with a rigid forefoot, excellent cork foot bed; very deep.
New Balance	1080 Slip On	\$200	Slip on	✓	Slip on	✓	Moderate	✓	Moderate	Firm	✓	Essentially a supportive slipper and casual fashion shoe to gives you all the cushioning of the best athletic shoe with no laces in a funky look
Propet	Bianca	\$160	Ortho	✓	Velcro	✓	Flexible	-	Deep	Flexible	-	Extremely important shoe due to the super-flexible elastic lycra toe box; Handles the most difficult orthotic foot very well.
Propet	Cush'n Foot	\$105	Slipper Casual	✓	Velcro	✓	Flexible	-	Moderate	Flexible	-	Neoprene upper, one large velcro strap. Excellent slipper or outdoor shoe.
Propet	Sylvie	\$145	Ortho	✓	Velcro	✓	Flexible	-	Moderate	Firm	✓	A ratchet type velcro closure makes for a great heel fit. Has a stretch no

## Ladies Sandals

Most sandals come with removable foot beds to accommodate orthotics or have specific orthopedic qualities.

Brand	Model	Price	Type	Removable Insole	Closure	Forefoot Flexibility	Rocker	Back Strap	Width sizing Available	Description
Earth	Skyler	\$100	Casual	None	Velcro	Flexible	Slight	✓	-	Comfortable well priced sandal. With memory foam footbed
Teva	Tirra	\$120	Casual	None	Velcro	Moderate	Good	✓	-	Best for arch support in young looking sandal for the road or beach.
Wolky	Jewel	\$240	Dress	Full Length	Velcro	Rigid	Good	✓	-	The best stiff-rocker walking sandal made. Extremely supportive sandal. Birkenstock look with a good heel offset, rigid rocker, and a removable foot bed.
Wolky	Cyprus	\$210	Dress	Full Length	Velcro	Moderate	Good	-	-	A lower stack hight, less stiff sandal than the Jewel. No back strap, but still has a removable foot bed.
Cambrian	Delphi	\$210	Dress	Full Length	Velcro	Rigid	Good	✓	✓	Extremely supportive sandal. Birkenstock look with a good heel offset, rigid rocker, and a removable foot bed. Also, a sport sandal with removable foot bed.
Cambrian	Marina	\$180	Casual	Full Length	Velcro	Rigid	Good	✓	-	The look of a Birkenstock... but it has a heel strap on the back... removeable footbed... great for wide based orthotics and heavier individuals... widths available.

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## Stiff Rockers

Brand	Model	Price	Type	Stack Height	Offset	Heel Counter Firmness	Ladies	Men	Available at LadySport	Available at FitFirst Footwear	Width Sizing Available	Description
New Balance	MoreV4	\$190	Neutral	35/31	4 mm	Moderate	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	This is one of the few stiff rocker maximalist shoes other than Hoka. It is important because of available multiple widths. The only concern with V3 is did they make it too flexible? We shall see!
New Balance	More Trail V3	\$190	Neutral	38/34	4 mm	Very	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The concern is did they make it more flexible in the forefoot and lose what makes this shoe special?
New Balance	Super Comp Trainer	\$230	Neutral	47/41	6 mm	Very	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The softest of all the stiff rockers. The plate insures offloading stiffness for the life of the shoe
New Balance	W840F	\$180	Neutral	33/29	4mm	Very	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	A new entry of an old classic that changes from a low profile traditional shoe to a maximal shoe. Big change here check out our video on the website for a full review.
Hoka	Bondi 8	\$200	Neutral	31/27	4mm	Very	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	The classic stiff rockered shoe. It is now available as well in men's extra wide.
Hoka	Bondi SR	\$200	Neutral	31/25	6mm	Very	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Leather upper, and slip resistant sole make it perfect for restaurant work, and weatherproof uniform stiffness.
Hoka	Clifton 9	\$180	Neutral	29/25	4mm	Very	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	This is the less bulky and slightly more flexible option. Generally not as good a choice for the heavier patient who needs a very stiff flex rating.
Hoka	Speedgoat 4 WP	\$190 WP/\$200	Neutral Trail	31/27	4mm	Moderate	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	A trail shoe that is available in wide. Very stiff model with excellent traction. Available in Goretex medium width only.
Hoka	Callenger ATR WP	\$200	Neutral light hiker	29/24	5mm	Moderate	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Available in mesh upper or leather waterproof. More of a light hiker/country walker with a stiff sole.
Hoka	Ora Recovery	\$80	Slide Slipper	23/18	5mm	-	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	This model is terrific for around the house and summer. The elastic toebox for hammertoes and breathability. Can also be used as an easy entry slide.
Hoka	Rocket X2	\$230	Neutral racer	36/31	5mm	Very	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Primarily a racing shoe that is perfect if you want light weight and the stiffness offered by a plate in the midsole. Do not expect durability!
Hoka	Stinson 6	\$180	Neutral trail	34/29	5mm	Very	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Very stiff wide toe box model which is excellent for off road. Traditional Hoka thick stack height style shoe.
Saucony	Endorphin Series	\$190 - \$300	Neutral	39/35	4mm	Moderate	✓	-	✓	-	-	The most important model in this series for us is the Shift. That is being discontinued in 2024. Lets see how this develops.
Asics	Evoride	\$160	Neutral	25/20	5mm	Firm	✓	-	✓	-	-	This is a very important model as the very early stage rocker makes it excellent for ankle fusions and ankle replacements. As well as any lack of dorsiflexion in this area.
Asics	Glideride 3	\$210	Neutral	31/25	6mm	Firm	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	This is the less expensive version of the above model. Key difference is the above Metaride has a stretchy toe box which is excellent for hammertoes in bunions.
Brooks	Ghost Max	\$190	Neutral	28/22	6mm	Firm	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	Brooks enters the max market with their first competitor to hoka. Very soft,very needed
On	CloudMonster	\$210	Neutral	33/27	6mm	Very	✓	✓	✓	✓	-	Not for the pronator, but ideal for the fasion sensitive person needing +/- orthopedic off loading

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