

2008 Running Shoe Review

Flexibility, cushioning, featherweight, a bit of flare and eco-consciousness are key qualities in this year's running shoes *by Elisa Kinder*



For the neutral, heavier runner, Asics has the 2009 Gel-Nimbus 10, which is even better than previous models. The broad, stable, but flexible, base adds just enough support for a smooth transition at toe off, and the four-piece forefoot outsole enhances its flexibility. The new asymmetrical lacing is a plus. It's a durable shoe that will take hard turns, provide a stable base, absorb shock and make each stride feel like you're stepping on a cloud. It looks good, too. (asics.com, 800-678-9435)



Designed only for women, the Ryka MC2 Run is a true motion-control performance shoe good for beginning road runners. If you overpronate, need midfoot stability and a stiff heel counter, this shoe will do the job. The heavy heel striker will appreciate the crash pad in the back of the shoe and its durability. An open weave mesh and shiny metallic pieces on the tongue and around ankle add style to it. (ryka.com, 888-834-ryka)

Responsive stability best describes the Etonic Kendari SC. Runners who pronate and need to keep the foot on a neutral plane will appreciate the control and transition from heel to toe. The memory foam conforms to the top of your instep and ankle for out-of-the-box comfort and no rubbing. This shoe breathes well, has good cushioning for use as a daily trainer or longer distance shoe and screams fit consistency. (etonic.com, 866-838-6642)



For the neutral or slightly overpronating runner Avia offers the Avi-Lite II for fast long-distance running. This lightweight stability shoe has an insole that adds to its cushioning and wicks away moisture – with actual breathe holes – keeping the feet cool and dry on warm days. The double-row lacing system makes it easy to adjust for wide and narrow feet. This shoe looks and feels more like a racing flat with its very flexible forefoot. (avia.com, 888-855-AVIA)



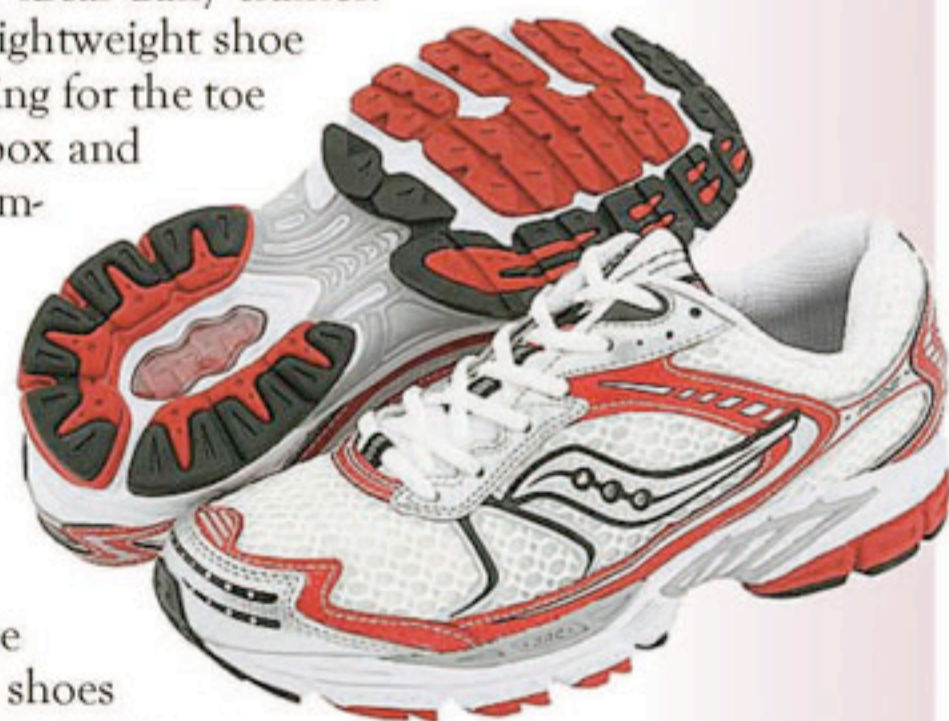
Mizuno's Wave Precision 9 continues the wave tradition of cushioning, flexibility and a smooth ride. Designed for the high-arched, rigid foot type, this shoe maintains its lightweight feel and hugs the heel for absolutely no slippage. The mesh upper is perfect for hot weather running. If performance, good traction and response are what you're looking for in a shoe, this one is worth trying. Size up at least a half-size on this one, as they run short. (mizunousa.com, 800-966-1211)



Designed by runners to mimic the advantages of barefoot running, Newton's Gravity Trainer is technology in motion. Neutral-to high-arched feet will appreciate the forefoot propulsion, its lightweight and close-to-the-road feel. Forefoot runners will adapt to this shoe fast; others may need a breaking in period – you'll feel it in your calves. This is a cushion trainer made for longer runs or for easy recovery days, but it also works for picking up the pace. Women should size up one full size. (newtonrunning.com, 877-860-7695)



Saucony's Progrid Ride is an ideal daily trainer. It offers the neutral runner a lightweight shoe and superior forefoot cushioning for the toe runner, flexibility, a wide toebox and a responsive smooth ride. Comfort from fun one and durability add to its high quality. The breathable, anti-odor sock liner and mesh outsole keep your feet feeling and smelling good. A similar shoe to try is the Progrid Jazz 12, which offers the same features. True to size, both shoes respond well on short and long runs. (saucony.com, 800-365-4933)



Light trail and road runners have Pearl Izumi's Peak XC, which is designed for speed and performance on those surfaces. It's not waterproof, and with an open mesh upper dry terrain, like Arizona's trails and roads are its friends. Heel/toe runners will like the forefoot cushioning, heel crash pad, excellent rebound and a lightweight feel. The forefoot stone bruise protection plate, flexgrooves and traction sole respond well on curvy trails. Size up half size for a better fit. (pearlizumi.com, 800-328-8488)

