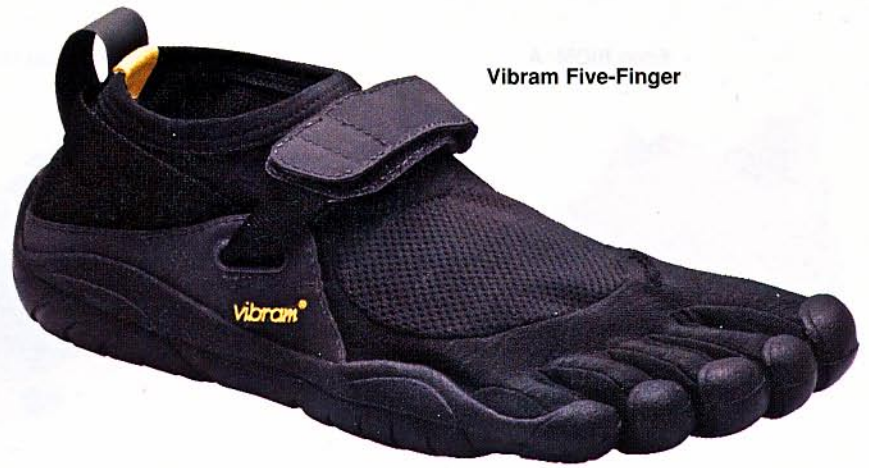


Sanuk Sidewalk Surfer



Vibram Five-Finger

the Foot. Simply said, the fulcrum helps the foot move efficiently from heel to toe. That is our basic focus. We believe that most feet work well, within their individual structures, and do not need corrective measures.

Dan Richards, President DRD Desig, Karhu Product Design/Development

The premise of this approach was born from our review of Ironman distance triathletes getting off their bikes after 56 or 112 miles and trying to get their running muscles into gear and overcome their cycling muscle memory. The goal was to put shoe underneath their foot no matter where their foot hit the road. No matter what kind of runner they were while training, they were not the same athlete off the bike.

Mark Sheehan, K-Swiss Director Performance Footwear

I see the term “natural motion” being used by different companies to denote some different things, so this first question I’ll ask is — What do you mean by “natural motion?” As an example, I know two companies are using a term like natural motion as a catch-all phrase for their efforts to engineer stability in a shoe without a medial post. Other companies are using terms like natural motion for the different things they are doing to the lateral crash area like de-coupling, beveling and softening.

These companies aren’t necessarily looking to eliminate the post — they are looking to reduce the lever arm affect at point of impact. Most running shoe companies have recognized that improper running shoe engineering in the lateral heel can actually accelerate pronation and cause over-pronation so you are seeing a lot of focus on things like reducing lever-arms. But is that natural motion? It feels like “natural motion” is a term being used by many companies as a new way of talking about reducing pronation.

Fritz Taylor, Vice President, Mizuno USA

Sensing the ground, one can regulate the impact of the body weight if you can sense the ground quickly. So communication is the key. We call it landing lightly, lever your foot after impact and settling, not pushing. Runners have been pushing because shoes do not flex properly. Then lifting the foot off the ground instead of pushing. Land, lever, lift. The upper body should have a slight forward lean, runner looking forward and a relaxed arm carriage. We should be moving forward with minimal effort.

Danny Abshire, Vice President, Newton Running

It’s how we intend to design, engineer and manufacture our shoes. It’s based on a very simple idea — make shoes that work in harmony with the foot of the runner.

Phil McCartne, Director of Global Running, Nike

To Puma, the principles of natural motion center around a few key points. Allowing the whole body and foot to work in its most natural way, such as running barefoot on grass. Providing just enough cushioning and support so that the various running types (from expert to beginner) have the ability to run on their normal running grounds without getting injured.

Puma Spokesman

Allowing the foot to move in a way that emulates being barefoot. Our sidewalk surfers exist today because I am a runner. I was running the steps at the beach in the morning in my New Balance shoes, then later that day went for a surf. When I ran up the same stairs barefoot I noticed a completely different range of motion that was much more efficient. The barefoot motion allowed all the muscles in my feet, including my toes, to engage in projecting me towards the top. I knew then if I could build shoes on flexible sandal footbeds that it would be closer to this more efficient motion.

Jeff Kelley, Founder, Sanuk

A friend of mine came to me with the idea. We played tennis together as kids. Tim was getting a lot of ankle injuries from rolling over in normal tennis shoes. Through practicing the Alexander Technique he realized that the most healthy thing for his feet and injuries was to be as barefoot as possible.

Galahad Clar, Founder and CEO, Terra Plana/Vivo Barefoot

Allowing the foot to function without hindrance.

Georgia Shaw, Marketing Associate, Vibram USA

How does your brand achieve natural motion?

Adidas formotion technology is a holistic concept that supports the natural movement of an athlete when running: the heel formation unit supports a more natural and smoother ride by reducing the sole angle velocity. Sole angle velocity is much lower when running barefoot compared to shod running. Heel formation further works together with the individual strike pattern and hereby allows the runner to follow his or her natural movement compared to more static restricting traditional motion control technologies.

The Adidas torsion system allows the natural movement of the forefoot relative to the rear foot for improved ground adaptation, increased stability and reduced stress on the Achilles tendon. The forefoot flex system assists the foot to bend in the forefoot for efficient toe off.

Adidas

The direct-injection PU (DIP) technology bonds the outsole and upper to the midsole without glue, therefore the construction does not stiffen up like a normal sandwich construction. This keeps the shoes flexible and torsionable. The midsole is close to the ground and therefore shows less influence on the natural motion path. The construction is not very soft to allow more response from the ground, this leads to more muscle tension and a dynamic running style. The BIOM works with anatomical shapes to support the foot over the full length. The midsole is shaped like a foot due to the DIP construction.

Nikolai, Ecco

Karhu, through the use of Fulcrum, focuses on moving the runner from heel to toe efficiently and quickly. In doing so we place much less emphasis on vertical forces and side to side movement during foot strike. Rather we focus on movement from heel to toe. Our theory is “If we can move a runner, more efficiently, from heel to toe we are setting the runner up for the next stride and helping them to run efficiently.”

Richards, Karhu