

RUNNING SHORTS

What is the latest trend in running shoes?

By Ken Johnson

When asked about the latest trend in running shoes, Brian Damon, Footwear Manager at Luke's Locker in The Woodlands, said, "It's back to normal."

A few years ago, barefoot running became popular. Barefoot runners tend to strike the running surface with the balls of their feet or the middle of their feet. This reduces the impact of the strike and is a more natural motion.

While relatively few runners got into barefoot running, many started running in "minimalist shoes." These shoes fit the foot like gloves on the hand, to include individual toe pockets. Generally, the bottom is made of leather or rubber. They provide most of the advantages of barefoot running and at the same time, provide the feet with some protection against debris.

Damon reports the minimalist shoe sales are down. Runners are returning to normal running shoes, shoes with more support and motion control. Some companies are now producing "normal shoes" with lighter material (knitting) on the upper part of the shoe. This reduces the overall weight of the shoe, without a loss in support and control.

Hokas came on the scene a couple of years ago and according to Damon, are still popular. Hokas look pretty much like traditional running shoes, except for very thick cushioning of the soles, particularly in the mid-foot. Technology has allowed the additional foam cushioning, without adding too much weight to the shoe. When wearing Hokas, your foot sinks into the cushioning, rather than riding on top of it. Hokas provide excellent shock absorption and stability.

Hokas were initially developed for long distance trail running for protection against rocks and roots, but now there are models for road running.

Hokas may be for you, but expect to pay \$130 to \$170 for a pair.

If you are not sure what is best for you, recommend that you visit a running store and talk to a professional. Much depends on factors such as your running gait, how far and on what surface you run on, whether or not you wear custom orthotics and, of course, what you can afford.

The nearest running stores to Huntsville are Luke's Locker in The Woodlands, Fleet Feet in Shenandoah and the Brazos Running Company in College Station.

Congratulations to all who completed the Houston Marathon or Half Marathon on Sunday. A list of local runners is below.

Recent race results:

Houston Marathon (26.2 miles), Jan. 17

Jason Wallace, 40	3:13:09
Steve Allen, 43	3:50:36
Darryl Shreves, 55	3:55:54
Melvin Neely, 59	4:04:54
Jose Moreno, 54	4:23:24
Carla Munoz, 35	4:30:30
Maria Wicker, 51	4:50:03

Tracy Schaub, 43	4:56:15
Kathy Lehman, 40	5:07:49
Jun Wu, 25	5:14:58
Matthias Woeckener, 27	5:15:03

Half Marathon (13.1 miles)

Patrick Ray, 26	1:38:31
Daniel Brietzke, 39	2:05:42
Ray Sarno, 68	2:38:31
Susan Haller, 44	2:40:08
Anna Shreves, 56	3:03:46
Mark Robinson, 69	3:06:42
Jennifer Langley, 59	3:16:38
Erica Mejia, 32	3:48:22

ABB 5K (3.1 miles), Houston, Jan. 16

Francisco Manzanares, 15	19:34
Matthias Woeckener, 27	22:31
Maria Wicker, 51	28:06
Patrick Justice, 17	31:50
Melanie Justice, 47	31:51
Haley Torres, 20	40:51

Run the Woodlands 5K, The Woodlands, Jan. 9

Donna Fabian, 41	23:49
Ken Johnson, 74	39:03

Upcoming races in Huntsville:

Jan. 23 – Frost Your Fanny 5K & 1-Mile Run/Walk, Spring Lake Sub-division
Feb. 6 – Rocky Raccoon 100-Mile Trail Run, Huntsville State Park
Feb. 13 – Rocky Raccoon 50-Mile Trail Run, Huntsville State Park
Feb. 20 – Sweetheart 5K, & 1-Mile Run/Walk, SHSU campus

For more information about these races and others in the area, visit the Seven Hills Running Club web site at <http://www.7hills.us> and click on Race Schedule.