A HISTORY OF USER EXPERIENCE DESIGN

Barefoot

was

Running

Sandals

Prior to



Barefoot To Sandal

As home to the Olympiad, its no surprise that running was a central part of the life in Ancient Greece. The first 13 Olympiads consisted of just running, all of which originated as a barefoot spectacle. It wasn't until about 450 BC that sandals were spotted on some athletes who traveled from cooler climates. The simple addition of the sole of the sandal increased ground traction and propelled the leg forward with greater efficiency. As the sandaled runners began to win more often, athletes all began to adopt the use of sandals. At first there was some skepticism, but the notable performance enhancements quickly had shifted users perspective around wearing the to compete.



Spikes for Sprinting

Fast forward centuries and we find Adi
Dassler—attributed with being the Father
of the modern running shoe—creating
running shoes for short to mid-distances.
His early designs were still leather, but
much more streamlined and included
spikes built into the sole of the shoe for
traction. These specialized shoes deviated
from prior running shoes that were just
regular shoes the user strapped traction to.
These shoes allowed the user a niche
shoe that was easy to use and
enhanced their performance,
specifically traction and speed.



Something for Everyone

New Balance's Trackster running shoe adapted multiple features to improve usability. As Metnal Itch notes, "...the Trackster enhanced traction, absorbed shock, and prevented injuries, which were common with the metal spiked sprint shoes of that period". Essentially revolutionizing the concept that running could be improved not just by body mechanics, but by the functionality of a well designed product: running shoes. New Balance went further and understood that injury prevention and functionality was about fit as much as materials, so for the first time ever the Trackster was available in multiple widths accommodating more runners than ever.



Interactiv

The grip of spikes synthetic upper and could be used on maximus was quite popular for and weekend jogg bruised feet. Ure becoming the new running spikes would grooved trainers diand athletes would design of the waff small protruding but adjusting form of trainers diget with metal spikes

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Super Style For Trackin' & Truckin' Super Style



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Lighter & Brighter

The grip of spikes but gentler, the light synthetic upper and the multiple terrains it could be used on made the Waffle Trainer quite popular for both elite athletes, and weekend joggers suffering from bruised feet. Urethane tracks were becoming the new norm, and traditional running spikes would tear them up, but grooved trainers didn't provide traction and athletes would slide. The unique design of the waffle sole—which had small protruding bumps—was like a self-adjusting form of traction runners didn't get with metal spikes. Since it adapted well to the surface being run on the average runner was even able to find success.

Fashion + Function starts

Up until about the late 70's running shoes
were "nothing more than laces and thin
fabric" according to one scholar. The
focus on progressing to lighter shoes and
traction based shoes that began to
welcome use from others besides elite
athletes was the predominant theme. As
running shoes began to fall into the
average joe's hands, the look and style
of the shoe began to be of more
concern to the consumer, and the big
athletic brands took notice of the
opportunity to give the consumer a
product that met their fashion and
average function needs.

Functional Fashion into the 80s

JUMA Leather Training Shoes

9190...The Pavement Jogger

As the fashion forward trend of running shoes continued gaining traction into the 80s, the user interaction was not as much focused on the usability of the shoe for performance running, rather, between the growth of running as a common sport, the accessibility and interest to watch elite athletes and therefore want to emulate them, coupled with a growing creative marketing field, running shoes evolved into a lifestyle brand that was created for daily user interaction. Streamlined looks focused on visual design, not just technical design, were prominent to draw users to buy. There was also a shift back to the use of leather versions.

Interactive

With so much evolution mid distance and track there was more of a ne could absorb the impac midsole during long run running itself was no ne 1980s was the era of the focused on elevating the of distance running. Most launch of a gel vs air m today. Users now has functionally focused to runners to feel confident longer runs and the impa on their bodies. The mid also brought a technica the heavy fashion era th

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Midsole Develop

With so much evolution around short to mid distance and track based running there was more of a need for a shoe that could absorb the impact on the runner's midsole during long runs. While distance running itself was no new spectacle, the 1980s was the era of the midsole which focused on elevating the quality and comfort of distance running. Most notably was Asics launch of a gel vs air midsole, still in use today. Users now had a shoe that was functionally focused to allow all levels of runners to feel confident and supported in longer runs and the impact those runs has on their bodies. The midsole development also brought a technical aspect back after the heavy fashion-focused era they were following.

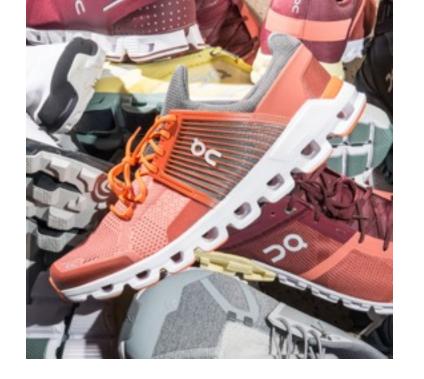


Back to Barefoot

As a nation became infatuated with the book *Born to Run,* Vibram capitalized on the sentiment and gave rise to FiveFinger toe shoes in the running world. It peaked the interest of, and gave a unique option to users who wanted the barefoot

experience without the pain and dirt of actually being barefoot on all terrains.

The initial interest gained traction coming off the era of built up midsoles, cushion and support. While users who embraced the 5 toe articulation loved the product, the lack of shock absorption, support, the need to train into using them to avoid injury, and the inability to really fit all feet well, made their usability less than optimal in the long run.



Endless Options

Today's running shoe landscape is the culmination of lightweight materials meeting functionality, comfort and fashion forward design. The 'athleisure' movement has everyone reaching for sneakers both in day to day and fitness. The running shoe evolution is one that has taken a specific item with one limited functioned, and evolved the functional design, materials and aesthetic in a way that the user can now seamlessly integrate a running shoe into day to day life and without looking out of place, or being uncomfortable. The user now has the luxury of choice in their running shoe allowing them to fit their exact preferences and needs.

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List of Resources

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