



ROAD
RUNNING



Foot Feel

WALK INTO A RUNNING STORE AND THE FIRST THING YOU'LL BE ASKED IS "ARE YOU A MIDFOOTER OR A HEEL STRIKER?" GENERALLY SPEAKING, MIDFOOTERS WANT A FLATTER SHOE, HEEL STRIKERS WANT AMPLE PLUSHNESS, AND MOST RUNNERS SHOULD GET SOMETHING IN BETWEEN. ONCE YOU IDENTIFY YOUR RUNNING STYLE, FIND THE RIGHT FIT USING THE SPECTRUM OF OPTIONS PRESENTED HERE, FEATURING THE SEASON'S TOP ROAD SHOES, FROM HEAVILY PADDED KICKS TO BARELY-THERE MOCCASINS.

by Justin Nyberg

THE MARATHONER

1. SAUCONY KINVARA 4

BEST FOR: Midfooters seeking cushioning

The Kinvara has the natural, flat-footed feel of an aggressive minimalist shoe, but when you land it's pillowy soft. That's because a thin but effective belt of padding runs along the midfoot. Combine that with its nearly structureless upper and you get a shoe that's race-flat light but still hardy enough to handle long training-day runs. 7.7 oz; \$100; saucony.com

THE CADILLAC

2. BROOKS GHOST 6

BEST FOR: Heel strikers

There's a reason runners have traditionally preferred high-heeled kicks to minimalist shoes—they feel better. The Ghost features a veritable mountain of foam in the heel (24 millimeters worth), lugs that soften the blow by splaying outward on each landing, and couchlike padding around the tongue. That mix makes it the most shock-absorbing shoe here. The trade-off is that it has the least natural feel. 10.7 oz; \$110; brooksrunning.com

THE NATURALIST

3. MERRELL ROAD GLOVE

BEST FOR: Barefooters

The Road Glove is a moccasin with a Vibram sole. The foam is only four millimeters thick, and the ground feels slap-you-back hard, which all but forces you to run gingerly, and with perfect form: you don't want to jump to this shoe straight from a traditional one, but ease into it and you'll develop freakish foot strength. 7 oz; \$100; merrell.com