



It's coming to that time of year when things are getting wetter and the trails are getting muddier. R4YL have poked, prodded, worn, and weighed the most popular trail shoes available in Australia, all to ensure you are appropriately armed to hit the trails at full speed. Shoes have been ordered according to their recommended retail price (RRP).

What's in the Weight of a Shoe?

THE WEIGHT of a running shoe is very important, because in most cases you have to carry them on a moving extremity - your feet. Taking a simplistic view, there are two main components that will contribute to the weight of a shoe. Firstly it is all of the "special features" of the shoe, things such as dual density, specialised cushioning systems, wedges, trusses and the like. All of these special features relate to how the shoe will perform, for example controlling motion or providing vast amounts of cushioning.

Secondly it is the "bulk" and materials of the upper, the midsole and the outsole that contribute to the weight of the shoe. The amount and type of material used in these areas will determine things such as the durability, water resistance and flexibility

of the footwear.

The challenge for shoe manufactures is to produce a shoe that has adequate "special features", whilst retaining good durability in the lightest package possible. Identifying what is appropriate for you is always the hardest part and often takes a bit of trial and error, regardless of the level of professional advice sought.

Trail shoes tend to be heavier than standard training shoes because of the increased "bulk" of materials used to ensure durability over the rougher terrain, and therefore they do not usually make a good transition from the trails to the roads.

All shoes tested in this review were weighted at R4YL headquarters and weights are given for a single US Size 9 men's shoe. **R4YL**



Adidas – Cardrona
RRP – \$140
Weight – 380g
Shoe Width – Narrow
www.adidas.com.au

The Adidas Cardrona is an uncomplicated, straightforward shoe that is highly suited to trails. Given its simplicity it is quite a heavy shoe, weighing in at 380 grams. The upper consists of coarse, open mesh, extremely breathable but also easily allows water, dirt and mud to penetrate the shoe. We found the sewn-in tongue was difficult to get comfortable when running and the mesh was not as conforming as other upper materials. The Cardona's midsole is single density EVA with three channels that run across the bottom of the shoe. We found these simply allowed even more water and mud into the shoe. The grip provided by the outsole was more than satisfactory for the roughest of trails and plentiful enough to provide good durability. Overall a straightforward shoe well suited for the price conscious, neutral runner.



New Balance 809 (Width 2E)
RRP – \$150
Weight – 406g
Shoe Width – Wide
www.newbalance.com.au

At first glance the presence of leather on the upper of the New Balance 809 made it look more like an off-road walking shoe rather than a performance trail shoe. Weighing in at 406 grams, it is not light, but it actually didn't feel overly bulky when running. The presence of both forefoot and rear-foot Abzorb cushioning in the 809 provided quite a reasonable level of comfort. The outsole is very adequate for trail running and extremely durable. We hardly marked it during the wear testing period. The shoe is built on a semi-curved last with a wide toe box area, and the absence of motion control devices in the shoe make it best suited to neutral runners or mild pronators. If you do not have any objections to heavier running shoes, the New Balance 809 is a very durable trail shoe at a good price.



Nike Free Trail 5.0
RRP – \$170
Weight – 281g
Shoe Width – Standard
www.nike.com.au

(Note: As with all Nike Free models, please be aware that running in these shoes should be introduced slowly over a period of time. For details see www.nikefree.com) The concept of barefoot running has really taken off since the launch of the Nike Free and we trialled the off-road version, the Free Trail 5.0. Nike Frees are extremely flexible and the Trail 5.0 is made using the same deep sipes (or cuts) in the midsole, however it has a more aggressive outsole for extra grip and fewer sipes, making it not quite as flexible as its other cousins. On the rough stuff we found the upper was just too flexible and couldn't keep the foot in place on top of the shoe, making it difficult to maintain form. It did outperform the standard Free 5.0 on dirt fire trails and smooth single tracks and was well suited to this type of running.



New Balance 907 (Width 2E)
RRP – \$170
Weight – 375g
Shoe Width – Standard
www.newbalance.com.au

Compared to the New Balance 806, the New Balance 907 comes with a wide range of functional features. The full bed heel and forefoot Abzorb in the 907 initially felt quite hard and the shoe itself was initially very inflexible. Only after five or six runs did the 907 begin to feel more cushioned and flexible, and correspondingly the ride improved significantly. The outsole provided a good combination of grip and durability without being too excessive and adding substantial weight to the shoe. Motion control in the 907 is provided through a half-length, dual density midsole and New Balance's Transitional Support System, making the shoe ideal for runners looking to control pronation. The upper was conformable, particularly in the toe box and the N-lock active lacing made the fit snug around the arch. The plastic toe protector is a nifty extra, giving added security for those little piggies.



PUMA Complete Trailfox
RRP – \$180
Weight – 290g
Shoe Width – Narrow
www.puma.com.au

The first thing that strikes you with the Trailfox is the weight, definitely light enough for an off-road race. This is due largely to a unique midsole design which reduces the material required by approximately 30% and also lowers the profile of the shoe. A hard protective plastic layer on the bottom of the shoe protects from sticks or rocks in sections absent of midsole. The upper is made from a water repellent ripstop material, incorporating a soft flexible sock liner, which proved to be very comfortable. The shoe has been built on a curved last without any major motion control features and thus will be ideally suited to neutral runners with a high arch. We found the low profile of the midsole and the weight of the Trailfox allowed it to make a seamless transition from the rough stuff to a standard run on dirt, grass and even performed adequately on the road.



Nike Zoom Air Kyotee
RRP – \$180
Weight – 318g
Shoe Width – Standard
www.nike.com.au

Due to the one piece sock-liner the Nike Kyotee felt super comfortable from the first time we tried them on. The shoe has quite a low profile, making for a really smooth and controlled ride on both extreme trails and the road, while the full length zoom air cushioning was extremely soft and quite responsive. The minimal outsole provided more flexibility in the toe of this shoe than others tested and although showing signs of wear was still holding up well at the end of the wear testing period. A plastic heel cradle provides some extra support at the rear for the rough stuff and protection from sticks and stones on the bottom of the shoe. Did we mention the weight? Only 318 grams, this one is definitely a keeper!



Asics Gel Trabuco VIII WR

RRP – \$180
Weight – 368g
Shoe Width – Narrow
www.asics.com.au

The Asics Trabuco VIII is not quite the monster truck off-road vehicle that is the Asics Eagle Trail, but is still a great shoe for the serious trail running enthusiast. Built on a semi-curve last, the fit of the Trabuco upper is a fairly narrow and the outsole is aggressive and durable. Weighing in at 368 grams it is considerably lighter than the Eagle Trail and more suited to a neutral runner or mild pronator. The functional lacing system built into the upper of the Trabuco gave a great snug fit to the shoe and a feeling of stability when running on the rough stuff. The rear and forefoot gel cushioning provided a comfortable ride without being overly soft and the water resistant upper did do a pretty good job of keeping the water out. Overall a very tidy shoe to take out and get muddy.



Pearl Izumi SEEK

RRP – \$199
Weight – 363g
Shoe Width – Standard
www.pearlizumi.com.au

Do any of your runs consist of portions of road and trail? Then the Pearl Izumi would definitely be worth considering. We would nearly have to classify the Pearl Izumi SEEK as a hybrid shoe, a trail shoe also suitable for road running. This means that it does not have the super aggressive outsole and durability of other trail running shoes, but makes it more adaptable. As with all Pearl Izumi shoes, you have to search far and wide to find a more comfortable fitting upper. The functional lacing system ensures a snug fit and the “virtually seamless” upper is just that. The semi-curved last and standard toe box width makes the SEEK suitable to a large percentage of the population. The cushioning, provided by “Skydex” was quite soft and remained so throughout the duration of the testing period. If amongst your normal routine you like to dabble in the rough stuff, have a look at the SEEK.



Brooks Cascadia Pivot

RRP – \$199
Weight – 366g
Shoe Width – Standard
www.runhappy.com.au

The Cascadia was one of the more minimalist trail shoes tested in this review, but that is not to say that it did not still perform admirably. The shoe has quite a low profile, adding an extra sense of stability when off-road, and the “rock shields” in the midsole did a great job of protecting the feet from sharp rocks in all but the roughest of terrain. The ride on the Cascadia was super smooth and provided an even transition through to toe off, thanks to the absence of a chunky heel or structural components. The hydro-flow cushioning system made for a comfortable ride and the upper was very light and comfortable, and although not water-resistant, dried quickly when wet. The Cascadia has been built on a semi-curved last and is ideally suited to neutral runners or mild pronators. Although formally a trail shoe, the Cascadia felt equally at home on road or dirt, making it a great and versatile shoe.



Asics Gel Eagle Trail Gore-Tex II

RRP – \$240
Weight – 402g
Shoe Width – Standard
www.asics.com.au

Asics claim that the Gel Eagle is for the “serious” trail runner and they are not wrong. This shoe is one tough off-road vehicle. The main platform of the shoe is similar to the Asics 2000 series and thanks to the trail specific IGS (Impact Guidance System) and fore/rear foot gel cushioning the ride was smooth and cushioned. There is a Goretex membrane inside the lining on the upper, making the shoe waterproof, while the functional lacing system provided additional ankle stability for those really rough spots. Two huge flex grooves in the forefoot allowed the Eagle Trail to flex easily through the forefoot, something that other beefy trail shoes did not allow. The durability of the Eagle Trail was not questioned as we were unable to put a dent in them during the whole wear testing period, but it comes at a price in terms of the cost and weight of the shoe. **R4YL**

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Now that the leaves have started falling from the trees and the sun is setting earlier than we'd like, it's about time to look through the winter wardrobe and plan what we're going to wear on those frosty mornings or street lit nights when all our best instincts suggest we'd be far better off inside on the couch with a hot cup of soup. In the lead up to the colder months, R4YL have tested out some of the latest long sleeve apparel, keeping in mind that a garment's excess heat and moisture management properties are just as important as its warmth.

IT'S GETTING COLD OUTSIDE

LONG SLEEVE tees have been listed alphabetically. A 'snowflake' rating system has been included to help you decide which top will suit your winter conditions – on a frosty -3 degree morning in Canberra, a 3 snowflake top would be ideal while a 1 snowflake top would be perfect for an overcast afternoon session around Centennial Park.



Adidas Response Long Sleeve Top ★
RRP - \$60
www.adidas.com.au

The Adidas Response Long Sleeve Top features engineered ClimaCool jersey mesh fabric for optimal ventilation and moisture management in key heat and sweat zones. The sculpted shoulders and longer sleeves will suit those with long arms, as well as those who like to tuck their hands inside their shirt on a cold morning.



Asics 1000 Series Elements Long Sleeve Tee ★ ★
RRP - \$55
www.asics.com.au

The Asics 1000 Elements long sleeve tee is a semi-fitted top made from Coolmax fabric which provides a snug, warm fit while moving moisture away from the body. The active cut features no side seams to help prevent underarm chaffing, and the gently elasticised cuffs stop the sleeves from riding up during your run.



Asics 2000 Series Statement Long Sleeve Tee ★ ★
RRP - \$70
www.asics.com.au

A soft touch Coolmax fabric is used in the Asics 2000 Statement long sleeve tee, making it very comfortable to wear. Again, the semi-fitted active cut has no side seams similar to the Asics 1000 Element tee, but the 2000 Statement tee features slightly longer sleeves and thumb loops that will help keep your hands warm on those cool mornings or keep the cuff tucked well under your gloves for those especially cold starts.



Brooks Revelation Long Sleeve ★
RRP - \$65
www.brooksrunning.com.au

Flat seam stitching and seamless underarm panels make the Brooks Revelation long top a good choice for anyone who suffers from underarm chaffing. Semi-fitted and anatomically cut from lightweight, quick drying Micro-Poly fabric, this top will keep you comfortable in cool to mild conditions when you don't want to be weighed down by bulky layers.

Jaggad Axis Top ★ ★ ★
RRP - \$90
www.jaggad.com

Jaggad, a relative new comer to athletic apparel provide a feature in the Jaggad Axis Top that no other top reviewed has, pockets! Although more suited to keeping your hands warm before starting a run than storing anything, it certainly distinguishes this top from others available. The breathable MicroTech fabric feels smooth against the skin and stretches comfortably with your movement. A half zip to a high collar and thumb loops to secure the cuffs ensure that you'll never be too cold, and the stylish and casual design might see you wearing this top away from the running track as well.



LineBreak Compression LS Tee ★ ★
RRP - \$100
www.linebreak.com.au

The LineBreak Compression LS Tee is marketed as a winter compression garment worn under your sports gear, although it could be worn comfortably on its own. The LS Tee is a snug, form-fitting top that is not the easiest garment to get on, but once over your head provides the secure even fit that you expect from compression garments and winter inner layers. This top works just as well as a recovery garment after a hard run, as it does during.



New Balance Technical Running Long Sleeve Trainer ★
RRP - \$50
www.newbalance.com.au

The New Balance Technical Running Long Sleeve Trainer is a semi-fitted raglan sleeve top made from textured polyester with a back mesh panel for maximum breathability. The high cut neck helps keep the draft out, combined with adequate sleeve and body length, creating a warm lightweight top that doesn't restrict your running action.



Pearl Izumi EKG Long Sleeve Crew ★ ★
RRP - \$129
www.pearlizumi.com.au

Engineered Knit Garment (EKG) construction allows the creation of fabrics of varying types and textures without seams. Pearl Izumi have used this process to create their Long Sleeve Crew, which allows one seamless piece of fabric to be used to create the body of the garment, while still maintaining the benefit of using ventilated panels. This is a form-fitting garment with mild compression properties that effectively regulates your temperature whether it's worn on its own or as a base layer.



Puma Half Zip LS Top ★ ★ ★
RRP - \$100
www.puma.com

Mesh inserts sewn into both the back and elbows make the Puma Half Zip LS Top ideal for a hard workout in cold conditions. The smooth Microfiber fabric wicks away moisture to keep you dry, while excess heat can escape from mesh inserts. The half zip with inner stormflap allows you to adapt the garment for freedom of movement and protection against the elements, while a zip guard and flatlock seams help prevent any potential irritation.



Flatlock seams are pretty much standard on all recent high tech moisture control garments. These are useful at preventing chaffing while running, especially under the arms.

As a lot of winter running is done before dawn or after dark, some manufacturers could do a bit more for a garment's visibility than a simple reflective logo.

A side effect of some of the synthetic fabrics used in today's running tops is that it can result in you getting a mild-to-nasty static electric zap when getting out of the car before training.