

Reviewed by JULIEN WICKS & DANIEL GREEN

IN THIS RACING FLAT REVIEW we tried and tested 11 of the specialised racing shoes currently available on the Australian market. It is always a difficult task to separate a true "Racing Flat" (i.e. light weight road racing shoe) from a light weight training shoe, as these training shoes can often also be suitable for racing. For this review each shoe was weighed individually, and the cut-off was set at 250g for a men's US size 9 shoe. All shoes outside this range will be included in the upcoming training shoe review.

So what do you look for in a racing flat? The weight of the shoe is one of the most important things to consider, and usually with a racing flat you are looking for the lightest shoe possible. However, the lightest shoes are often the least durable and lacking in cushioning and control, so finding

the right shoe can be a compromise. If you need extra cushioning and support, you may need to go for a slightly heavier flat. Additionally, you need to consider what event you will predominantly be using the shoe for. The lightest shoes can often be worn for shorter events such as 5km and 10km races. Longer events such as the marathon may require the protection offered by a slightly heavier shoe, depending on the athlete.

Don't expect as many miles out of a pair of racing flats as you do a pair of trainers. These shoes are designed to be fast, but unless you're racing every second day they're likely to outlive the trainers you're running in today.

Shoes are arranged in ascending order of price, and we hope you find something that might be right for you.

Diadora Iron Mythos \$150

The Diadora Iron Mythos racing flat has been designed specifically with the triathlete in mind and comes standard with elasticised laces, but given its simplistic and functional design it still is suitable for the competitive runner. In a throwback to the 80s, the Iron Mythos comes equipped with a single velcro rip strap to help provide a secure fit. The absence of the tongue contributes to a low profile upper which is generous in the forefoot region. The durable outsole will provide hours of racing pleasure.

Weight: 242g
Sizes Available: 5-13



Saucony Grid Fastwitch 2 \$150

The Saucony Grid Fastwitch 2 was a good length and width and a perfect mid-weight racing shoe for the enthusiast or half marathon/marathon distance. The dual density midsole offered some stability for the mild pronator and overall the shoe was very balanced and flexible. The outsole on the Fastwitch was quite generous for a racing flat and should provide several 100 kilometres of use. The open weave mesh of the upper was very breathable and comfortable. A very nice, well-priced racing flat.

Weight: 234g
Sizes Available: 7-14



Brooks T4 Racer \$150

Truly inspirational! If you are looking for a specialised racing flat that provides a great cushioned ride at an amazing weight, you need to have a look at the Brooks T4 Racer. A very flexible and Hydroflow cushioned midsole makes this shoe ideal for races up to 10km. The T4 is suited to neutral and mild pronators and is of standard width and length. A unique outsole pattern provides adequate grip, but don't expect a large volume of miles from the T4.

Weight: 188g
Sizes Available: 5-14



Saucony Grid Type A \$160

Slightly heavier than its Fastwitch cousin, the Saucony Grid Type A is an uncomplicated racing flat. The single density midsole makes this shoe ideal for the neutral runner, and the bright red upper will ensure that you stand out in a crowd. The controlled midsection and average forefoot flexion of the shoe will ensure a smooth and comfortable ride for the large majority of runners. Ample high density rubber in key positions on the outsole will provide months of good service to any owner.

Weight: 247g
Sizes Available: 4-13



Brooks Racer ST 2 \$160

Gather round all flat-footed runners, we have a racing flat for you. Even though the Brooks Race ST 2 is not quite as light as some shoes of this type, it's built on as straight a last as you will ever find in a racing flat. With its copious dual density Hydroflow-equipped midsole, the Racer ST 2 is perfect for heavy pronators or well built runners. The light weight upper is an unmistakable canary yellow and comes with a roomy toe box suitable for a large family of toes.

Weight: 249g
Sizes Available: 5-14



Nike Zoom Streak XC \$160

Are you a minimalist? If so, Nike has made the shoe for you. The Zoom Streak XC is a slipper with laces and a thin layer of rubber masquerading as an outsole, making them the lightest of all shoes reviewed. The small amount of Air in the midsole does not provide substantial cushioning, but you're unlikely to notice as you fly to your 5km PB. However, caution should be taken before attempting a marathon in these very light weight shoes. A reasonably narrow and shorter than average fit, you may want to double check you size before ordering these.

Weight: 168g
Sizes Available: 7-13, 14, 15



Adidas Supernova Comp 2006 \$180

The Adidas Supernova Comp provides a fast, low-profile ride. The dual density midsole provides good support for neutral and pronating runners alike, and the minimalist rubber outsole comes with a series of small suction-cups which provide outstanding grip on all surfaces. The forefoot is narrower than average, and adequate midsole flexibility ensures a smooth transition through to toe off. The Supernova Comp is a good choice for all road races ranging from 5km all the way up to the marathon.

Weight: 220g
Sizes Available: 7-12, 13, 14, 15



>> **Adidas Adistar Comp FW05** \$200

Oh baby, even the carrot orange brightness cannot detract from the sheer brilliance of this shoe. The Adistar Comp provides a great combination of cushioning and control, with weight kept to an absolute minimum by removing all unnecessary portions of the shoe, including chunks from the midsole. The traditional Adidas three stripes have been incorporated into the forefoot upper to increase the flexibility of this region, while the uniquely shaped space-aged tongue has a grippy underside to ensure it will not move mid race.

Weight: 217g

Sizes Available: 6-12, 13, 14



Asics Gel Ohana Racer \$200

With subdued metal flame styling, Asics have produced a reliable racer for all distances from road distances up to the marathon. The highly flexible mid-section and low profile ride of the Ohana makes it highly responsive when running at pace. The well-ventilated upper surrounds a wider than average forefoot, providing plenty of room for most runners. The durability of the outsole has been improved, compared to the superseded Gel Magic racer, providing greater longevity to this all-round performer.

Weight: 215g

Sizes Available: 4-15



Asics Gel Noosa Tri 2 \$200

The Asics Gel Noosa Tri 2 is a light weight version of the Asics DS Trainer with another throw back to the 80s. Why 80s? Because that's when fluoro was king! A substantial dual density midsole provides a very cushioned and controlled ride for a shoe of this weight. The outsole is particularly generous in the forefoot region and allows good grip in both wet and dry conditions. For anyone who fancies riding before their run, the Noosa Tri 2 comes with two sets of laces, one of them elasticised.

Weight: 250g

Sizes Available: 4-15

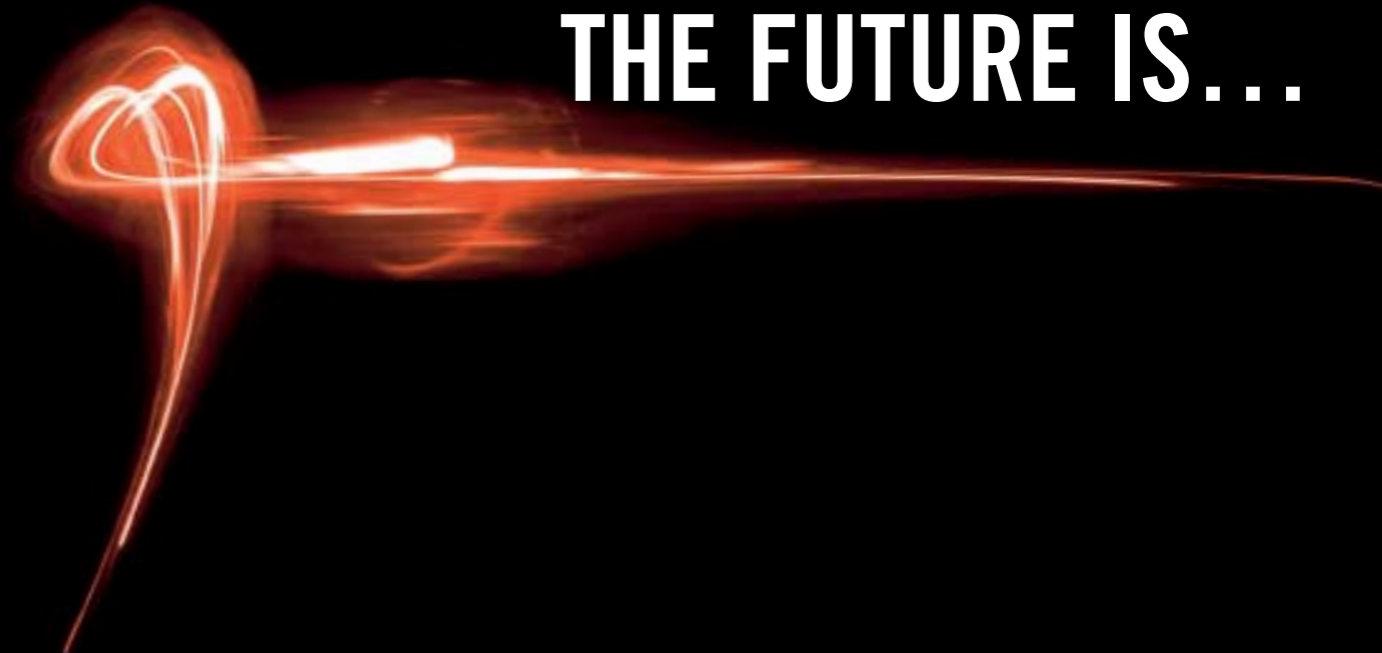


Nike Air Zoom Marathoner \$200

The Nike Air Zoom Marathoner takes over from where the Zoom Streak XC left off. An increase in cushioning, outsole material and upper durability makes this mid-weight racing flat highly suited to half marathon and marathon distances, as its name suggests. Approaching a straight last profile, the Marathoner will provide a smooth ride for a large majority of runners and the full length rubber outsole provides decent traction on a range of surfaces. The Zoom Marathoner's sparkling laces are Nike's contribution to the 80s sub theme of this review, outstanding.

Weight: 230g

Sizes Available: 7-13, 14, 15



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