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## Path Perfect

SHOES TO SUIT EVERY STRIDE  
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### BEST FOR DIRT ROADS

**A. Hoka One One Zinal \$160**  
These aren't the usual max-cushioned Hokas. Testers praised the lower stack height and unusually firm yet responsive midsole. The fully recycled vegan upper is simple and low fuss. Subdued, sparsely placed four-millimeter lugs are best on packed dirt, but the performance minded will find the Zinal a refreshing departure from Hoka's usual tall, tippy, ankle-rolling stature. 8.5 ounces (men's, pictured) / 7 ounces (women's); 4 mm drop

### BEST FOR LONG DAYS

**B. On Running Cloudultra \$180**  
Two layers of shock-absorbing, hollow pods under the heel and midfoot cushion feet for miles on end. A thin, pliable mesh upper reinforced with recycled polyester wraps around a stretchy, padded interior bootie—a combination that had testers raving about all-day comfort and secure hold. Flipping a tab loosens the laces to accommodate forefoot swelling during long runs. 10.4 ounces (men's) / 8.6 ounces (women's, pictured); 8 mm drop

### BEST FOR UNEVEN TERRAIN

**C. Merrell Agility Peak 4 \$130**  
Pulling the laces on this shoe tightens webbing integrated into the upper securely around the foot. That kept testers' feet from sliding, even in sloppy conditions on off-camber trails. A tacky Vibram MegaGrip outsole and five-millimeter lugs provide solid traction, a full-length rock plate protects (but also makes the shoe rather stiff), and ample cushioning adds comfort, resulting in a shoe ideal for combination run-hike outings or sloppy trails. 1.3 pounds (men's pictured); 6 mm drop

**BEST FOR SHORT RACES**

**D. Salomon S/Lab Pulsar \$180**

This lightweight racer was designed for the superhuman speed of the world's greatest trail runner, Kilian Jornet, but is supportive enough for mere mortals tackling short distances. Despite weighing just six ounces and having a minimal profile tuned for speed, the Pulsar is astonishingly comfortable and forgiving, thanks to a cushioned, energetic midsole that provides snappy recoil. The stitch-free mesh upper is accommodating but formfitting enough to keep debris out. We noticed wear after only a few runs, so best to use these sparingly. 6 ounces (unisex); 6 mm drop

**BEST FOR RUGGED RAMBLES**

**E. Saucony Xodus 11 \$150**

Like an off-road vehicle, this shoe begs for rough terrain. Aggressively toothy five-millimeter lugs let us charge both uphill and down. An amply padded tongue, cushy heel collar, lightweight exterior heel counter and toe bumper, and a rock plate create all-around protection. More adventure-worthy features: predrilled outsole sockets enable you to easily add studs, and a D ring makes the shoe gaiter-compatible. 11.9 ounces (men's) / 10.5 ounces (women's, pictured); 4 mm drop

**BEST FOR ROCKY DESCENTS**

**F. Adidas Terrex Speed Ultra \$160**

Tackle tricky downhills with surgical precision in this low-stack-height (26 millimeters in the heel), lightweight grip master. Inspired by gravel-bike tires, the densely patterned, 2.5-millimeter lugged outsole felt as sticky as climbing shoes. The harder you push the snappy, energetic midsole, the better it performs, providing a "palpable sense of stored and released energy," said one tester. "You don't have to run fast in this shoe, but you will want to." 8.5 ounces (men's, pictured) / 7.4 ounces (women's); 8 mm drop

