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**BEST FOR:**  
Long Technical Outings

**BEST FOR:**  
Road to Trail Routes

**BEST FOR:**  
Race-Pace Efforts

## Rough Passage

THESE SHOES WILL KEEP YOU FLOATING ON ANY PATH

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### Hoka One One Torrent 2 \$120

When missteps mean rolled ankles on rocky terrain, Hoka's thick-soled, ultra-cushioned shoes usually don't inspire a let-'er-rip attitude. Enter the Torrent 2, a technically focused trail runner featuring a low five-millimeter stack height. This trimmed-down shoe navigates rocks with precision but doesn't sacrifice the brand's cushiony heritage. It's updated with a more secure, reinforced, engineered-mesh upper that eliminates hollow spots for a skin-tight fit. In short, it's a Hoka suitable for technical trails. "The Torrent 2 identifies as a classic Hoka product while adding a lean, responsive attitude," noted one tester. 9.3 ounces (men's, pictured); 7.6 ounces (women's); 5 mm drop

### Altra Timp 2 \$140

The slimmed-down Timp 2 has a more secure fit up front than its predecessor, earning it a hallelujah from testers who have historically balked at Altra's extra-roomy toe box. Other great updates include a new foam midsole that adds "an amazing amount of spring and bounciness" and "felt just right on rocks," according to one tester. A new lug pattern on the outsole grips well on a wide range of trails and runs smoothly on roads, and deeper flex grooves give a spry feel. Despite all the changes, Altra remains true to its zero-drop philosophy, so there's plenty to love for brand fans. 9.9 ounces (men's, pictured); 8.7 ounces (women's); 0 mm drop

### Salomon Sense 4 /Pro \$140

Leisurely trail runners beware: the Salomon Sense 4 /Pro "gives a license to speed," as one tester put it. Suited for both short- and long-distance days off the pavement, the midsole features a thin polymer layer on top of a dual-density TPU and EVA blend that claims to reduce fatigue-causing vibrations. Skeptical? We were too. But as one tester noted, "I now buy that claim wholeheartedly," and we couldn't agree more. The airy hydrophobic-mesh upper wicks moisture while holding your feet tight enough to confidently tear through turns like a finely-tuned sports car at full throttle. 9 ounces (men's); 7.6 ounces (women's, pictured); 4 mm drop



**BEST FOR:**  
Cross-Country Excursions

**BEST FOR:**  
Rugged Rambles

**BEST FOR:**  
Warm Scrambles

**Inov-8 X-Talon G 235** \$185

Purpose-built for the challenging, grassy, muddy surfaces of the Lake District in the United Kingdom, the X-Talon G 235 is a quick-footed grip master for when things get sloppy. Testers were completely confident going full tilt, sidestepping, and jumping obstacles due to its ultra-low 7-to-13-millimeter stack height and aggressive graphene-infused eight-millimeter lugs. "I felt very agile on soft surfaces," one tester noted, but also warned to "step gingerly on hard pack," where those massive lugs could lead to an injured ankle. 8.3 ounces (unisex); 6 mm drop

**Saucony Xodus 10** \$150

Nine iterations of the Xodus worked great for super technical, somewhat sloppy trail running. The tenth is almost an ounce lighter, has a new cushioning compound, and features a sleeker fit than previous versions. The consensus? These are damn good updates. "Amazing fit!" said one tester. "Ridiculously comfortable," and "Just the right amount of spring!" said another. True to form, the Xodus 10 can still tackle the gnarliest terrain with aplomb. But now it feels lighter, freer, and even semi-fast. 11.7 ounces (men's) / 10.5 ounces (women's, pictured); 4 mm drop

**Merrell MTL Skyfire** \$100

The lightweight, super-breathable Skyfire is ready for sunny adventures. It performed on everything from red Colorado dirt and granite slabs to Hawaiian lava rock and dust, and even through river crossings. A grippy rubber outsole and internal bootie make for secure footing—we felt in control wearing this shoe. A rock plate sandwiched between the outsole and midsole does a good job providing protection underfoot. And testers reported that the fit "felt good even on the first run" and is "definitely not overly boxy or too roomy." 9 ounces (men's, pictured) / 7 ounces (women's), 6 mm drop