

Aussie study challenges claims for hi-tech running shoes

March 12 2009



People are seen jogging in central France. Australian researchers have admitted they had found no scientific proof that hi-tech running shoes improve athletic performance or limit injury. Newcastle University physiologist Craig Richards said the myth of the modern running shoe had exploded into a vast industry since the 1970s but a study found there was no scientific proof they worked.

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Newcastle University physiologist Craig Richards said the myth of the modern running shoe had exploded into a vast industry since the 1970s but a study of [sports medicine](#) literature since 1950 found there was no scientific proof they worked.

"A collective psyche has developed around these shoes," Richards, the

lead researcher, told AFP.

"It's so ingrained now that to even suggest that there's no evidence that they work gets a very rude reaction from people.

"But we searched all the sports medicine literature we could find looking for a carefully controlled trial measuring whether or not modern hi-tech [running shoes](#) decrease [injury](#) rates, improve performance or decrease the risk of osteoarthritis later in life.

"We basically couldn't find anything," he said.

While the shoes were subject to extensive biomechanical testing, Richards said his study -- published in the current edition of the [British Journal of Sports Medicine](#) -- showed they had never been examined in a real-world environment.

"You can't determine whether or not a shoe changes your injury rates in a laboratory," he said.

The shoes typically feature elevated cushioned heels intended to absorb impact, protect the Achilles tendon and stop the foot from rolling, but Richards said the claims had never been put to the street test.

Sports medicine, not advertising, that was to blame for the myth, he said.

"The manufacturers don't actually promote them as injury [prevention devices](#), that's not where the message comes from. It's actually coming from health professionals," said Richards.

Richards said his team would launch a study on the benefits, if any, of such shoes later this year.

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