

TOP PERFORMER

Sales of running shoes are growing, but are they being used for running in? The NPD Group investigates



In 2007 the sales of running shoes rose three per cent amongst British consumers, registering over £360million and accounting for around 13 million pairs. This encompasses the larger running market, which includes running-inspired leisure footwear and sales of classic styles, as well as performance models.

Consumers continue to identify strongly with running shoe styles, be it old or new, to wear for leisure purposes, with around half of the running market value being

attributed to this segment (see figure 1). Possibly only a small proportion of the models purchased by this segment will be performance models. It's more likely they'll be the classic and inspired variants of 1970's and 1980's performance lines.

Double-digit increases

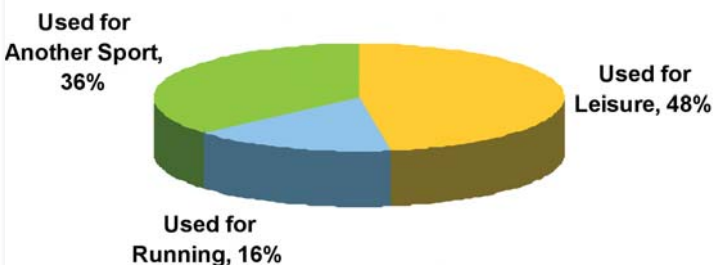
Of course, many consumers purchase running shoes for their intended purpose and whilst in the general market sales were lagging slightly behind the 2006 level, sales through the retailers participating in NPD's Sports Footwear Retail Panel* saw double-digit increases in 2007 - more on this later.

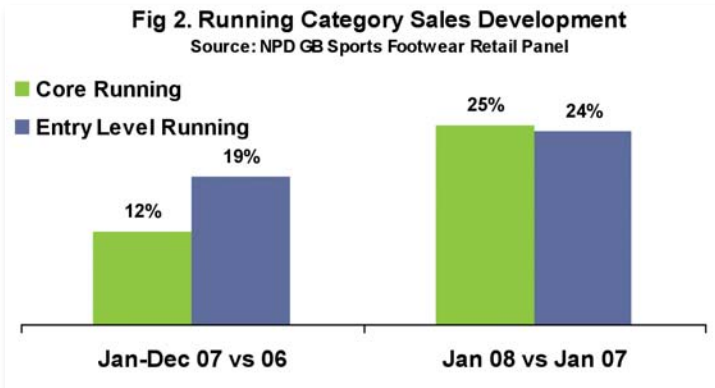
The third segment of the usage for running shoes is 'other sports', accounting for just over a third of the value of all running footwear sales. This is a very broad category, but upon investigation the statistics highlight a growing trend.

A greater number of pairs purchased in 2007 are destined to be used as gym club shoes, more so than in the past three years. Approximately a third of value sales of running shoes being used for other sports is attributed to gym usage. Many of these gym goers will be using the treadmill as part of their exercise routine, so in essence a proportion of these will still be used for running. This can

Fig.1 Running Shoes Intended Use Jan-Dec 2007

Source: NPD GB Sports Footwear Consumer Panel





*The NPD Group's Sports Footwear Retail Panel reports on sales information received from participating retailers JD, King of Trainers, Size?, JJB Sports, Footlocker, Sweatshop, Decathlon, Alexandra Sports, Freeman, Grattan and Littlewoods Shop Direct.

The NPD Group is always seeking to add new retailers to the service. For more information contact The NPD Group sports team on 01932 355580.



Fig 3. Running Category Shoe Type Profile
Source: NPD GB Sports Footwear Retail Panel



only be a good thing, as far too often people are seen in gyms running on the treadmill in a pair of old Reebok Classics!

NPD's Sports Footwear Retail Panel

Amongst the retailers providing their sales data to NPD (see below for a full list), sales of performance running shoes were particularly buoyant, with sales of core running models increasing by 12 per cent in value and entry-level running shoes increasing by 19 per cent in value, compared to 2006. This strong growth continued into January 2008, with both sub-markets increasing around 25 per cent in value sales versus January 2007 (see figure 2).

At 50 per cent of the market, motion control and stability shoe types account for the largest amount of sales (see figure 3) and contributed to most of the core running sub-market growth. Cushion shoe types also sold well in 2007, but the biggest performing shoe type was 'lightweight', although in context it still only accounts for less than 10 per cent of the performance shoe category. Both Nike and adidas were key drivers in the lightweight category, whilst the obvious brands drove motion control and stability growth.

Top-selling models from the Retail Panel for 2007 include Nike's Air Zoom Moire Plus and Pegasus and Asics' Gel 1120 and GT 2120 variants amongst many others.

For a full overview of the running segment from NPD's Consumer Panel and Retail Panel contact NPD as below. ↗