

EDITOR'S  
PICK

# Hoka One One Carbon X

Carbon-fiber-plated running shoes from Nike may grab all the headlines. But Hoka's more-inclusive take on the technology is the one most people should buy.

**Add the word** "carbon" to any running shoe nowadays and two things are likely to happen: the price tag will double and everyone will want it. (Heck, you're probably reading this article because it's about a carbon-fiber shoe.) The hype machine really got rolling two years ago, when Nike's Vaporfly 4% gained celebrity-level popularity with its embedded carbon-fiber plate, prompting other brands to rush their own carbon-fiber shoes to market.

Funny thing is, Nike wasn't the first to enhance a running shoe with carbon fiber; in the early 2000s, Adidas added a carbon-fiber plate to the racing-focused AdiStar, dubbing it the AdiStar ProPlate. So why aren't we talking about that shoe today?

Well, Nike's marketing team did a fantastic job promoting the Vaporfly 4%'s benefits through its staged attempt to break the two-hour marathon barrier, "Breaking 2"; the shoe was almost as big a star as marathoner Eliud Kipchoge, the 2016 Olympic champ and official world-record holder

(with a 2:01:39 set at the 2018 Berlin Marathon) who was striving to accomplish the feat.

On top of that, an independent team of University of Colorado researchers confirmed the shoe's time-shaving benefits. Not surprisingly, serious runners began believing it would propel them toward quicker times.

Fast-forward two years, both Hoka and New Balance have released carbon-plated running shoes as well. However, comparing the 4% to the Hoka Carbon X or New Balance 5280 because they all have carbon-fiber plates is like comparing a car, motorcycle and speedboat because they all have engines. So what's the difference and which one is best for you? Short answer: it depends.

Shoes like these are typically designed for very specific purposes. The New Balance 5280, for example, is intended for mile road races — hence the name 5280, the number of feet in a mile. Fittingly, it's the shoe that eight-time Fifth Avenue Mile champ Jenny Simpson has worn while winning the prestigious race down that