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Spring into running: Gizmos to footwear for guys

By Greg Ptacek



As spring times go, this year's has been a longtime coming. Many parts of the country for the better part of the last two months have been gripped in cold, wet weather with some even under snow when winter's nip should have been far behind.

But warm days lie ahead, by all accounts, as we make our way to the official start of summer on June 21st. These are transcendent days for runners – not too hot, not too cold – when running with minimal gear is what the joy of the sport is all about.

And just in time to make the most of this bit of good fortune, there are new products for guys from shoes to gizmos that promise to make pounding the pavement more fun.

Here's a short list of favorite new seasonal offerings:

Comfortably Connected: The **LG Tone+ Bluetooth headset** (www.lg.com) is the next generation headset – the perfect running companion to staying connected and entertained. It's intuitively easy to use and delivers superb sound. But it's the complete package that makes this headset a winner, with features that include:

- Bluetooth connectivity for a wire-free experience.
- Make outgoing calls and answer incoming calls with the push of a button
- Noise reduction technology that removes background noise on phone calls, and
- Up to 10 hours of music time and 15 hours of talk time.



Beauty and Braun: **Aetrex RX Runners** (www.aetrex.com) are a solid middle-to-long distance running shoe with plenty of shock absorption in all the right places. They're perfect for running on concrete sidewalks and asphalt streets where you want lots of cushioning and a solid structure to reduce pain from pounding on manmade surfaces. Insulated, high-tech materials keep you warm and dry. You could unknowingly splash through a pothole with these snugly strapped to your feet and not be the worse for wear. So it's that more surprisingly that these Ram Tough workhorses have an Audi-esque sheath. The look great with the grey/copper combination particularly handsome. You might even seamlessly transition from a workout at the gym to a walk on the red carpet with never having to change these shoes.

<http://video.mww.com/Aetrex/Mens>



It's All In The Wrist: There's running for fitness and then there's training. If you're serious about getting into competitive running – whether it's your first 10K or your next marathon – consider the **Magellan Switch GPS Watch**

<http://www.magellangps.com/Products/SwitchSeries> It's like having a personal

coach. Innovative features including “Activity Pacer,” which not only shows runners if they are on target with their goal, but provides specific targets to attain the desired result. Combined with the new Magellan Active website, data from the Switch and Switch UpGPS watches is kept in a single location where users can see maps and charts of their activities and accurately gauge their performance. A barometric altimeter delivers precise elevation data and a thermometer monitors and captures outside temperature. With 8 hours of battery life (expandable to 24 hours) and the easy-to-read 1.26” resolution display, this digital running device provides all the features you need for a competitive edge.



A Spring In Your Step: This likely isn't the first place you've heard about the **Adidas Energy Boost**. It's gotten rave reviews since its release earlier this year and is my personal favorite for an all-around, mid-weight running shoe. The difference between it and the competition is its patented “boost cushioning,” designed to allow you to run longer and more comfortably. It works. This shoe is light and fast without being minimalist, which makes it ideal for switching between heel-first and mid-sole or toe –first gaits. This my choice for best all-around running shoe of the season. <http://www.adidas.com/us/product/mens-running-energy-boost-shoes/CY950>



Respectfully Organic: New on the running apparel radar is **Respect Your Universe**, a company that aims to live up to its name with a line of shorts, shirts and duffle bags made from organic or recycled materials. Whether they originate from rare fair-trade grasses grown in small batches or junkyard tires, I'm here to tell you that RYU's apparel is the most comfortable I've ever worn. Smooth as silk light as a feather and ultimately breathable, they're the closest thing to running naked (without all the attendant consequences). Inversely, the duffle bag is tough, virtually unscratchable. (You can use it to haul cinder blocks when not at the gym.) Competitively priced with a just a enough design to make it eye-catching without looking like a peacock, the RYU apparel line comes in the hot-for-this-season red-black-gray color palette. <http://shop.ryu.com/men>



Spot On Jiggy – Finally, a mention for a new “all-natural, homeopathic, energy patch” – the world's first, no less. Ok, let's call a spot a spot. It's a caffeine patch, 65 mg of it to be precise, which puts it on the caffeine scale between Coke/Diet Coke and Red Bull. Now, I'm from the school of running that in the morning one foot does not move in front of another until a cup of espresso-strength coffee has been consumed. The problem with that crutch is that unless you have the time to eliminate it before, you're running with a

belly full of jostling coffee. And while the **Spot On Energy patch** did give me quite the same jolt as the cup of java, it provided enough boost to get me through my morning run sans coffee. To its credit, it contains more than just caffeine, like “thea sinensis” to fight fatigue. Whatever. Each patch lasts 4 to 6 hours and if your metabolism requires a Monster Energy drink to hit high gear, you can wear two patches at a time.

Kickin'!www.spotonenergy.com

