

Review: Nike Free RN Flyknit 2017  
- 2017/10/26 14:56

The successor to last year's Nike Free RN Flyknit, this is an evolution of the sock-like concept of the running shoe, replicating the unhindered experience of training and running barefoot. The 2017 version continues to have a minimalist design. But while the 2016 edition featured design enhancements (compared to its predecessor, the Nike Free) so that it could wrap better around the foot, the 2017 edition tweaks the near-seamless upper for extra strength and a bit more support.

The Nike Free RN distance mesh upper is what essentially defines the shoe's sock-like fit, and the Flywire cables wrap the foot for better lock-in by holding together the upper with the sole. Knits are placed strategically around the entire upper, essentially to reduce foot movement inside the shoe while running; this is a good thing because the less foot movement there is inside the shoe during physical training, the better it is for traction, grip and change of direction speed.

The shoe is quite lightweight, around 60% lighter than the conventional upper materials of some other running and training shoes. There is a lot of space in the forefoot, and generous wriggle-room for the Nike Free RN women's shoes have such a snug fit that it can lead to a cramped feeling. The only drawback of the new materials in the 2017 edition is the slightly coarse finish of the inner upper part of the mesh, which means you'll have to wear socks while wearing the Free RN Flyknit 2017. Secondly, while the mesh itself is a bit stronger, it offers slightly less ventilation than its predecessor; at least that is how the foot feels initially when you upgrade from the 2016 edition.

The outsole is perhaps the most interesting part of the Nike Free RN 2017 edition. It has a tri-star pattern that is cut into the foam; it looks exactly like a web of triangles. The 2016 shoe had a flexible interconnected geometric-design outsole pattern; the 2017 tri-star evolution improves on this, extending equally both vertically and horizontally to match the movement of the feet. It offers the same grip as its predecessor on most conventional surfaces, such as concrete, a sand track or the treadmill surface. There is extra protection on the front and back of the outsole, for your toe and heel.

The midsole in the Nike Free RN Black is dual-layered, with a layer of foam beneath the foot. Runners will surely notice the change in heel-toe drop, 8mm rather than the 4mm in last year's Free RN Flyknit.

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