

Kit Review: More Mile Cheviot2 hill shoes

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Those with an aversion to budget kit look away now!

I'm as keen on the established brands, especially for shoes, as the next man or woman. They don't spend millions on product design, testing and marketing for nothing after all. But is the 'new' technology and material availability around hill/fell shoes so advanced that it can't be adopted by entry-level or less well known brands? I think not.

Anyway, I was browsing online, looking for bargains, end stock sales and second hand, for that pair of shoes that can be used for training in order to save wear on your expensive kit. You know the drill. I stumbled across More Mile Cheviot2 shoes and never having heard of them before, did some research.

This is an own brand hill running shoe, designed and produced for Start Fitness under the More Mile Brand and available in store and on-line. The company is based in Northumberland (and may be the reason why many of the reviews I read were from Northumberland Fell Runners athletes). After being impressed by some of the glowing (yet balanced) reviews, I decided to take the plunge and invest in a pair. Well, at £30 you can only go so far wrong.

Price

On the subject of price, by retailing at only £29.99 (including delivery, which was inside two days from eBay), these shoes are between £30.00 and £50.00 cheaper than the most popular alternative shoes on the market, which is their main selling point, because if you can get a whole lot more than £30.00 worth of use out of them (and saving your good kit for Sunday best in the meantime), then they are money well spent.



First impressions were that they seemed visually very similar to Inov8 Mudclaw 330/333s, especially the sole with its 'bi planner' type heel and stud pattern. The build quality seemed good, and having picked this up by reading an earlier review, I can concur that the size tag in the left shoe was almost identical to that used by Inov8 and the lace eye loops and laces were identical. So it's entirely possible that these come from the very same factory in China as Inov8s.

Product details

At first inspection, the upper seemed to be constructed of a lightweight flex mesh, cemented construction with moisture-wicking lining, again similar in appearance to Inov8s. Upon wearing

them, they felt like they had protective toe guards (these will need a little softening, with wear), and the inner lining and tongue had a decent amount of padding for added cushioning and protection.



The outsole felt rigid, maybe too rigid, but there were some serious lugs on show – I could see these being very good in mud. The true test was going to be that first run in them, but before I did, I weighed them against my not-so-dry other shoes:

Comparative weight

Salomon Speedcross3 (wet): 945g

Walsh Ultra red (damp): 668g

More Mile Cheviot2: 700g (new).

Some initial scratching around revealed that 700g isn't as light as the Inov8 Talon, Mudclaw 272 or the aforementioned Walsh Racer, but is certainly no heavier than the Mudclaw 330. And because they feel soft, flexible and comfortable when worn, they feel quite light on your feet, which is just as important as the actual weight in a way.

Comfort and sizing

Based on a single run over the Carnethy 5 route, the comfort and fit was good. I'm a size 9 and bought that size, but a 9.5 would have been fine too, as they are a neat fit, but not overly so. Maybe very thick socks would have presented a problem though. The uppers are soft and of a one-piece construction and there appeared to be no joins, lace sections, or firm pieces that rubbed when running, and the tongue stayed in place and protected the top of the foot well. The fit was appropriately snug for rough terrain, whilst not cramping the toe area. I did 'feel' the shoes a while after finishing my run, but I'm hoping that this is as with all new shoes and will ease off. The heel area held well when ascending, with no sign of heel-slip. The laces are rather annoyingly long, but stay fastened quite well.



Grip

This is the strongest point of these shoes. The tread is very aggressive and compares favourably with the Inov8 Mudclaw (from memory). The Mudclaw is a lower shoe, so feels a little different, but during my Carnethy 5 run I ascended and descended everything from boggy ground, through heather, to rocky bits and thick mud, and they coped very well with everything, especially the tricky traverse down towards the Howe. They have used a durable compound for the sole and give a pretty good traction on wet rock based on my limited outing.



With such enormous and deep lugs, when you're on hard ground you actually feel like you're raised up on platforms. This feels a little odd at first, at least until you find yourself in soft terrain, where the lugs can dig down a little more. Although the lugs are deep, they are also quite wide and closely packed. That, combined with a relatively secure sole, makes them react better to tarmac than you'd expect. My main concern will be over the durability of the uppers, which I think in most cases will dictate the life of the shoe. I would say a realistic lifespan is probably 6 - 8 months, depending on how you use them. That isn't bad at all for the price.

In summary

This is a comfortable, supportive shoe, with excellent traction in the majority of conditions, for less than £30.00. Does it matter that much that you may have to buy 3 in the time period that you may only have bought 2 of your normal shoe choice? At the price, it would still in most cases be cheaper overall. In my opinion, and again I stress I've only run in them once, they are a shoe well worth having in your shoe cupboard, and an excellent choice as a training shoe or for races where thick mud is the terrain or very good grip is required. If you like the Inov8 Mudclaw 330/333 or even the Mudroc 290, you might like the More Mile Cheviot2 at around a third of the price.

