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adidas Asian Tech Training 2004

What makes you plonk down RM250 for that pair of running shoes? Fifteen years ago I could get myself a pair of Air Pegasus for RM150 and that would already be near the top end of Nike's range. Today RM250 can only get you a pair of basic technical running shoes. If you're a running club member, you can probably get a higher end pair after club discounts.

If you're an experienced runner, you'd know what I mean. But what if you're a beginner runner? What drives you to buy that pair? Certainly advertising, friend's influence and it's design play significant factors in your decision. I consider myself above average in terms of shoe knowledge, if there ever was a term for it. I've kept myself updated via magazines, forums and had even been at a [Nike](#) technical briefing some years back. But just this morning, I had the fortune of attending [adidas](#)' Asian Tech Training, conducted by Mr Udo Mueller, the giant sports company's Global Technical Marketing Manager who is a sub 2:30 marathoner. Normally this kind of training (or briefing if you may) are limited to the trade shows for the press or to some world class marathon expos, so I'm quite impressed with adidas gesture to open this to normal, but nevertheless the important, folks like us. It's certainly a demonstration of the commitment by the company to educate sports people on their products.

Attended by 10 other [Pacesetters](#) members, some [Hashers](#) and adidas' Concept Store employees, the modules of the training covered the new Ground Control System (GCS), the a3 technology, the ClimaCool 4th Gen Footwear and Apparel, and a little bit on Formotion System in apparels. The focus was primarily on the sport of running but with adidas' heritage in football, we were also shown some slides on its football boots' technology. As an added bonus, we even had first glimpse (and touch) on the microprocessor embedded adidas-1 running shoe.

The session began with a short video clip of Paavo Nurmi lighting the Olympic cauldron and Emil Zatopek winning his historic 3 races in the Helsinki Olympics. Mr Mueller who have met Zatopek (whom Adi Dassler - founder of adidas - custom made his running spikes for) said that Zatopek and his wife, a javelin thrower, shared a unique bond that extends beyond their common date and year of birth. Both won their Olympic gold medals within the same hour in Helsinki! How many can lay claim to that record? I recalled reading in the book "Marathon! The Greatest Story Ever Told" that the International Olympic Council recognized the magnitude of Zatopek's achievement by having his statue erected in the compounds of its headquarters in Lausanne.

Mr Mueller then went through the slides and video presentations of the definition of overpronation, the GCS, touching briefly on the 10-year old Torsion technology plus an interview with the great Haile Gebreselassie, in which he revealed albeit abashedly, his favourite food. You'd have to ask me personally what that is as I'm not telling here!

The most promising product to me is the 2005 ClimaCool running shoes which reduce heat buildup by 50%. From its design, it seems to fall into the Performance Trainer category. The ClimaCool running T-Shirt is also interesting in that there's a collar strip that "tricks" the brain into believing that the body heat is consistently being kept stable. Finally I was able to try out the [adidas-1](#) which has a microprocessor that fine tunes the fit and cushioning to the runner's running style. The on-board computer calculates the changes every 4 footstrikes and there's even a manual mode to tailor to the runner's preference. The USD250 shoe felt a bit firm but it remains to be seen if this will help the runner. Some wear-testing opportunities (next para) might be useful.





The adidas-1

I left the training understanding more on adidas' philosophy behind their product innovation. I'm more tempted to give some of their products a try in the near future. I also hope this is a first step for adidas to bring in more products to their specialty running outlet in MidValley Megamall (the present stock is way too limited and doesn't do its product range justice). Another good move would be to provide running club members some opportunities for wear-testing as this will allow club members to try out some of the technical products.

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