

New Balance 760 Review

By: Mike Janeo

I picked up my brand new pair of New Balance 760 last April 28. I was so excited that I planned to start testing it the next day, but due to the continuous rainfall throughout that weekend, I was forced to wait for the following week to finally lace it up and run with it. My curiousness and excitement brought me on-line to search for articles about the shoe and here are some of the notable technical specs of the 760s from the New Balance web site

(<http://www.newbalance.com/products/MR760/>):

- *TS2® Transitional Support System helps create a smooth transition from heel strike to toe-off*
- *Stability Web delivers midfoot support and reduces the weight of the shoe*
- *N-ergy® in the heel provides NB's most advanced shock absorption and cushioning*
- *LockDown Liner™ is integrated into lacing to provide a custom fit without smothering your foot*
- *ABZORB® Strobel Board runs full length of shoe to maximize shock absorption and comfort*



Fresh out of the box... New Balance 760

I just started running last October of 2009 and since then, the only pair of shoes I've used is my perfectly fit and comfortable Nike Run Avant. I know that New Balance makes some of the finest running shoes out there and just the thought of getting one of their latest releases made me even more thrilled to see how it compares with my old reliable pair of Nike.

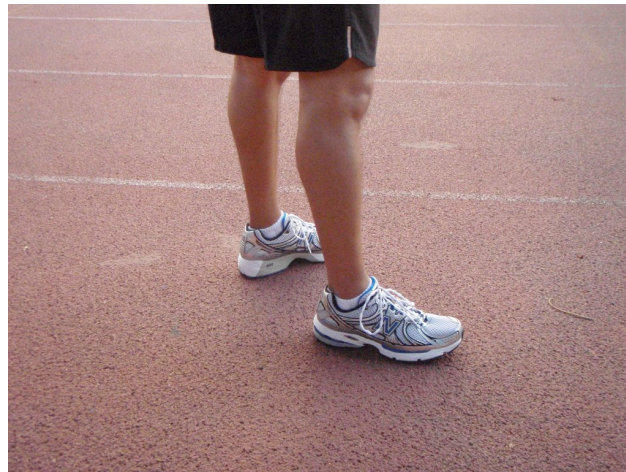
For the past 3 weeks, I've been using the NB 760 more often, I accumulated about 70KM mostly from interval trainings at the Ultra and tempo runs at Bonifacio High Street. I also ran and chased the sun with my NB 760 during the Neutrogena Run last May 16.

Training

The 1st time I laced up my 760 was at the Ultra Oval, I immediately felt the snug fit as it braced my heels and up to the mid-foot. One of the first things I noticed and liked about this shoe are its laces which NB calls *Sure Lace*; it makes the shoe laces secured once you pull it tight and it doesn't loosen up unless you deliberately do so.

The 760s provided my foot with the right balance between comfort and support during my interval training. The shoes are fairly light considering the amount of support it carries which is a very important factor during sprints. I felt good all the way and there was no any kind of discomfort all throughout the training session considering that this is the 1st time I used it.

If there's one thing that's new to me and that I need to get used to, it will be the roomy forefoot of this shoe. I was given the 2E width and it enabled me to freely move my toes even if I lace it up tightly. It's no big deal at that point since I didn't feel that it made a negative impact on my run.



My 760s touching the oval track's surface for the 1st time

Slow Runs

I was able to do a couple of weekend slow runs on my own on the roads of Fort Bonifacio with my NB 760 and similar to my experience during training, the shoes provided enough support needed by a heavy runner who has a low arch and a mild over-pronator like me. I felt that the shoes are really solid and firm but are still flexible because of the thin mesh material around the shoes especially on the toe box.

After the 10th KM, I felt a blister on my right mid-foot, near the arch. It was not very annoying so I finished my planned route and checked the blister afterwards. Though it was a tiny one, this is the 1st time that I incurred a blister, I can't say that it's all because of the shoes but I'm not discounting the possibility that it's one of the factors that may have caused it.

Chase the Sun; The Neutrogena Run

I signed up for 10K at the Neutrogena race primarily to test the shoes and see how it performs on an actual race environment. I ran as fast as I could at a 05:20 pace on the first 3 KM and my feet felt great with the NB 760s. I'm not a naturally fast runner so I know I won't be able to keep that pace for the entire race, I slowed down and kept myself focused on my feet as my heel strikes the asphalt and how my feet would feel with the NB 760 on in a race where the pace is consistently faster.



Near the finish line of the Neutrogena Race

Towards the final 2KM, my legs got a bit tired and from there I also felt that my feet and the shoes are getting a little bit heavier. I managed to pick up my pace on the last km and sprint for a few hundred meters towards the finish line to end my race strong. At the end of the race, I found out that I have a new blister just around the same area where I had my first one.

After these runs, here's how I evaluate this shoe:

Plus Points

1. Design and Color: I saw at least 4 different colors of the NB 760 on-line and in Planet Sports and for me, my Silver/Blue pair is the best. The design is subtle (it does not look like a shoe from outer space) and is made to be functional. The nice comments I got

from friends who saw me sporting the shoes with my weekend casual wear are confirmation that it really looks great! ☺

2. *Sure Lace*: I'm very satisfied with how it works. I don't have to worry about pulling my laces too tight or what will I do if it gets loose because it stays in place once you've pulled them together. (I recently visited Planet Sports in Rockwell and saw that the laces are also sold separately!).
3. Reflectors: This shoe has more than enough reflectors for your safety if you are usually off running on the roads before sunrise or at night.
4. Light and comfortable: The thin mesh material keeps the shoe flexible and comfortable.
5. Great fit especially in the heel and towards the arch. The *LockDown Liner™* wraps the mid-foot for a snug and comfortable fit.
6. Shock absorption and cushioning: *N-ergy®* and *ABZORB®* are trademark features of New Balance and they are known to provide ample amount of shock absorption and cushioning which is very much needed by heavy runners like me.
7. Stability: *TS2®* or its *Transition Support System* is very evident on the shoe's performance which benefits me a lot having a low arch and being a mild-overpronator.

Delta Points

1. Blisters: I cannot confidently point out the specific factor in the shoe that may have caused me to get blisters but I just had to point it out here as a delta point since I haven't experienced having blisters for the longest time that I was using my Nike Run Avant.
2. Wide toe box: Not a big deal for me, there could be positive and negative effects of having this (I'm thinking blisters could be a negative effect ☺) but having a roomy feeling on the forefoot is something that I needed to get used to at first.

Over-all, I'll give it a **4 out of 5** rating. For me, the New Balance 760 is a great stability training shoe built for faster pace but short distances. Low arched runners who have an over-pronation problem will benefit much from this shoe.

I will continue to use the 760s for my training runs as I was able to maximize the features and benefits of this shoe during my interval and tempo runs. I will reserve my Nike Run Avant for my long runs on a weekend and for my future races.