



Federal Trade Commission Protecting America's Consumers

For Release: 9/28/2011

Reebok to Pay \$25 Million in Customer Refunds To Settle FTC Charges of Deceptive Advertising of EasyTone and RunTone Shoes

Settlement Order Prohibits Reebok from Making Unsupported Claims that 'Toning Shoes' Strengthen, Tone Muscles

In its ongoing effort to stem overhyped advertising claims, the Federal Trade Commission announced that Reebok International Ltd. has agreed to resolve charges that the company deceptively advertised "toning shoes," which it claimed would provide extra tone and strength to leg and buttock muscles. Reebok will pay \$25 million as part of the [settlement](#) agreement. The funds will be made available for consumer refunds either directly from the FTC or through a court-approved class action lawsuit. Consumers who bought Reebok toning shoes or toning apparel can submit a claim [here](#).

"The FTC wants national advertisers to understand that they must exercise some responsibility and ensure that their claims for fitness gear are supported by sound science," said David Vladeck, Director of the FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection.

Consumers should carefully evaluate advertising claims for work-out gear and exercise equipment. For more information see: [How's that Work-out Working Out?](#) [Tips on Buying Fitness Gear](#).

Reebok's EasyTone walking shoes and RunTone running shoes have retailed for \$80 to \$100 a pair, while EasyTone flip flops have retailed for about \$60 a pair. Ads for the shoes claimed that sole technology featuring pockets of moving air creates "micro instability" that tones and strengthens muscles as you walk or run.

According to the [FTC complaint](#), Reebok made unsupported claims in advertisements that walking in its EasyTone shoes and running in its RunTone running shoes strengthen and tone key leg and buttock (gluteus maximus) muscles more than regular shoes. The FTC's complaint also alleges that Reebok falsely claimed that walking in EasyTone footwear had been proven to lead to 28 percent more strength and tone in the buttock muscles, 11 percent more strength and tone in the hamstring muscles, and 11 percent more strength and tone in the calf muscles than regular walking shoes.

Beginning in early 2009, Reebok made its claims through print, television, and Internet advertisements, the FTC alleged. The claims also appeared on shoe boxes and displays in retail stores. [One television ad](#) featured a very fit woman explaining to an audience the benefits of Reebok EasyTone toning shoes. She picks up a shoe from a display and points to a chart showing the muscles that benefit from use of the shoes, while a video camera continues to focus on her buttocks. She says the shoes are proven to strengthen hamstrings and calves by up to 11 percent, and that they tone the buttocks "up to 28 percent more than regular sneakers, just by walking."

Under the settlement, Reebok is barred from:

- making claims that toning shoes and other toning apparel are effective in strengthening muscles, or that using the footwear will result in a specific percentage or amount of muscle toning or strengthening, unless the claims are true and backed by scientific evidence;
- making any health or fitness-related efficacy claims for toning shoes and other toning apparel unless the claims are true and backed by scientific evidence; and
- misrepresenting any tests, studies, or research results regarding toning shoes and other toning apparel.

ftc.gov/reebok gives consumers the basic facts about the Reebok settlement and directs them to [apply for a refund](#) if they are eligible.

The Commission vote authorizing the staff to file the complaint and approving the proposed consent decree was 5-0. The FTC filed the complaint and proposed consent decree in the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Ohio on September 28, 2011. The proposed consent decree is subject to court approval.





David Vladeck, Director, FTC's Bureau of Consumer Protection, announces that Reebok will pay \$25 million in consumer refunds to settle FTC charges of deceptive advertising of Easy Tone and RunTone shoes at the Federal Trade Commission Sept. 28, 2011.



(Left to Right): Dana Barragate, Staff Attorney, East Central Region, David Vladeck, Director, BCP, and Larissa Bungo, Assistant Regional Director, East Central Region, answer press questions following the FTC's announcement that Reebok will pay \$25 million in consumer refunds at the Federal Trade Commission September, 28, 2011.

NOTE: The Commission files a complaint when it has "reason to believe" that the law has been or is being violated, and it appears to the Commission that a proceeding is in the public interest. The complaint is not a finding or ruling that the defendant has actually violated the law. The consent decree is for settlement purposes only and does not constitute an admission by the defendant that the law has been violated. Consent decrees have the force of law when approved and signed by the District Court judge.

The Federal Trade Commission works for consumers to prevent fraudulent, deceptive, and unfair business practices and to provide information to help spot, stop, and avoid them. To file a complaint in English or Spanish, visit the FTC's online [Complaint Assistant](#) or call 1-877-FTC-HELP (1-877-382-4357). The FTC enters complaints into Consumer Sentinel, a secure, online database available to more than 2,000 civil and criminal law enforcement agencies in the U.S. and abroad. The FTC's website provides free information on a variety of [consumer topics](#). Like the FTC on [Facebook](#) and follow us on [Twitter](#).

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(FTC File No. 1023070)
(Reebok NR)

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Vea este comunicado de prensa en español.

Related Items:

Federal Trade Commission, Plaintiff v. Reebok International Ltd., doing business as Reebok, Defendant.

(United States District Court for the Northern District of Ohio)

Case No. 1:11-cv-02046-DCN

FTC File No. 102 3070

[Reebok Television Ad](#)

[Complaint Exhibits 3 – 7](#)

Consumer Information:

- [How's That Work-Out Working Out?](#)

Business Information:

- [Advertising FAQs: A Guide for Small Businesses](#)

Last Modified: Tuesday, October 4, 2011

From Article at GetOutOfDebt.org