

The new Moonwalkers robot shoes are definitely lighter and supposedly safer



The Moonwalkers went in 2022 when the company behind them, Shift Robotics, promised it had created “the world’s fastest shoes.” They’re not exactly shoes, though: they strap on top of your existing shoes like you’re putting on a pair of Texas, and they put 10 wheels underneath each foot to turn every step into a glide, like you’re perpetually walking on a moving sidewalk. They’re adult Heelys, basically, only bigger, higher-tech, and more expensive.

Now, Shift Robotics is back with a new pair, the Moonwalkers X, which the company says it plans to show off at the CES gadget extravaganza in Las Vegas next week. The new shoes are lighter – 3.2 pounds on each foot, which is still a lot but a full pound lighter than the original – and are meant to be much easier to learn and use. Shift Robotics says it overhauled the control system for better maneuvering in tight spaces, improved shock absorption, and switched from 10 wheels

to six on each foot.

One important thing we don't know? The price. The original Moonwalkers are \$1,400 a pair, and Shift Robotics says only that it will announce the X price when the shoes start shipping in the first half of this year.

Shift has always imagined these as the sort of thing you might wear in everyday life

Shift says the Moonwalkers are primarily intended for business and commercial uses for jobs that require a lot of movement. You can imagine how, say, a person packing boxes in an Amazon warehouse might benefit from easier and faster walking. But Shift has always also imagined these as the sort of thing you might wear in everyday life, like Rollerblades you never need to take off.

In the years before the pandemic, lots of companies were exploring this kind of thing: Segway-Ninebot's Drift W1 electric skates were another spin on the electric skates idea, and the Hoverwheel was once seen as a successor to the hoverboard. None of these ideas really took off, though – scooters appear to have a future on some city and campus streets, but we're still waiting on a mainstream revolution in personal transit. But I'm just saying, I've heard much worse ideas than "Heelys for grown-ups."

<https://www.theverge.com/2024/1/3/24023910/moonwalker-x-robot-shoes-skates-ces-2024>