

# 04 Hike



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## Trail Shoes

For years, we've been calling this category "light hiking" shoes, but we never really liked the term that much. Yes, the seven shoes here are this year's best hiking shoes. But they're more than that. Vasque's climbing-shoe-inspired Equalizer is technically an approach shoe that excels at scrambling on rocky terrain. Others, such as Danner's Ascend GTX, are more suited to backpacking. And then there are shoes like Kayland's Vertigo Light, which are versatile enough for almost anything you do on the trail. **BY BEN HEWITT**



### Kayland Vertigo Light (20 oz) \$180 [kayland.com](http://kayland.com)

**1.** Lots of support, very little weight—that's the Vert Light's recipe in a nutshell. Built on the same last as the company's much burlier Vertigo High, the 20-ounce Vert Light actually weighs less than some of the low-cut hiking shoes we tested. But it's much sturdier than all of them, thanks to its stiff leather rand (the piece that joins the sole and the upper), sturdy ankle support, and precise toe-to-heel fit.

**2.** Don't hesitate to set out with a 30-pound pack. This boot can take it. The Vert Light's nylon-and-polyester-weave uppers are remarkably abrasion-resistant—our test pair still shows nary a scuff or scratch. The sole also boasts a rockered profile that lends a lively feel. A note of caution: Although the slightly concave outsole grips well on soft surfaces, it felt a bit less sure-footed on slick and steep rock.

**3.** The Vert Light's Cocona lining helped keep testers' feet impressively dry on hot days. And with its breathable eVent membrane, three-quarter height, and ample tongue overlap, it was the most waterproof boot we tested, making it great year-round. One tester's feet stayed bone-dry after plowing through wet, early-season snow all day. Note: It fits narrow-to-medium-volume feet best.