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## Best Running Shorts for Men of 2024

By [Joel Lee Balsam](#)



Reviewed by [Marlo Jappen Porto](#)

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You don't need to hit the track every day to want a good pair of running shorts. Finding the right pair makes a big difference in your comfort and willingness to keep up your exercise routine.

Plenty of running shorts promise nifty features like perforated fabric and innovative pockets, and decisions like inseam length and whether or not you want a built-in liner take time to figure out. But, according to Alex Golowin, head coach and race director at Running Expert, it's most important to find shorts that are lightweight, moisture-wicking, allow a wide range of movement, and prevent chafing. We narrowed down the options, with the Lululemon Pace Breaker Lined Short earning our top recommendation as the best running shorts for men.

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## Best Overall

**Lululemon Pace Breaker Lined Short »**

**PROS:**

- ✓ Available in three inseam lengths
- ✓ Comes in lined or unlined version
- ✓ Well-designed pockets in liner and body
- ✓ Lightweight, high-quality material

**CONS:**

- ✗ Expensive
- ✗ Too long for some runners

[Buy From Amazon](#)

Lululemon's days as a brand best known for women's [yoga pants](#) are long gone. The Canadian retailer makes noteworthy athletic wear for both men and women, and its Pace Breaker Shorts earn our top pick. Made with Lululemon's soft mix of recycled polyester and elastane, these shorts are light, breezy, and supremely comfortable.

The relaxed fit and availability of 5-, 7-, and 9-inch inseams allow for versatility. The author of this piece, Joel Balsam, has owned a pair of

Lululemon shorts for years and is impressed with its longevity despite dozens of washes.

One question to ask before buying a pair of running shorts is whether you want them to be lined or unlined. If you opt for the lined version, the built-in liner prevents chafing and allows you to run without underwear. The liner also has two pockets to hold your phone and wallet without bouncing.

The unlined version, on the other hand, offers a more classic fit that you'll want to wear with underwear. Regardless of which lining option you choose, these shorts come with tight zippered pockets on either side as well as a small key pocket at the rear.

Specs

List Price:	\$78
Material:	Recycled polyester and elastane
Inseam(s):	5-, 7-, or 9-inch
Sizes:	XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL

[Buy From Amazon »](#)

Best Budget

Aolesy Men’s 2 in 1 Running Shorts »

**PROS:**

- ✓ Good quality for the price
- ✓ Liner pocket, zippered back pocket, and two side pockets
- ✓ Built-in compression liner prevents chafing

**CONS:**

- ✗ Just one inseam option
- ✗ Heavier than other models

[Buy From Amazon](#)

These running shorts from Amazon feature a compression liner and a pocket similar to the Lululemon Pace Breaker, though they retail for just a fraction of the cost. They're also designed with a pair of regular thigh pockets as well as a zippered pocket on the tailbone for keys, wallets, or bank cards, so you don't have to stress about storage while you're on a run.

The outer material is stretchy, though it feels thick-to-the-touch, similar to how a men's bathing suit feels. Overall it's comfortable, but heavier than competing pairs.

In terms of length, the 5-inch inseam plus liner combo is ideal for running without thigh restriction and it reduces chafing. Note: There isn't the option of a longer inseam for taller guys or for those who want to cover more of the thigh.

However, they come in more than a dozen classic colors. And, with its affordable price tag, they could be worth adding to your wardrobe to try or as an extra if your other shorts are in the wash.

Specs

List Price:	\$31.99
Material:	Polyester and spandex
Inseam(s):	5 inches
Sizes:	S, M, L, XL, XXL

[Buy From Amazon »](#)

Best for Long-distance Running

Patagonia Strider Pro Shorts »

**PROS:**

- ✓ Lightweight and comfortable
- ✓ Quick-drying and anti-odor
- ✓ Five pockets for ample storage
- ✓ Available with a 5- or 7-inch inseam
- ✓ Built-in hoop for hang drying

**CONS:**

- ✗ Small brief liner
- ✗ Fits small

[Buy From Patagonia](#)

While Patagonia might have built its name on climbing gear, it has successfully broken through with runners, hikers, and trail runners alike. Made with spandex and recycled polyester, these shorts are comfortable and remarkably light. The material is treated with HeiQ anti-odor technology to stave off stink and it has a water-repellent finish.

Another plus is the four stretchy pockets around the waist that have elastics both at the top and the bottom to keep your items secure. There’s also a zippered pocket at the rear for even more storage. The drawstring on these shorts allows adjustability for a secure fit while also acting as a sweat guard.

This pair features a built-in brief-sized liner. While Balsam personally isn’t a fan, as he prefers boxer-style liners, some may like this smaller liner size because it’s lighter in weight and more breathable on the thighs.

Specs

List Price:	\$85
Material:	Recycled polyester and spandex
Inseam(s):	5- or 7-inch
Sizes:	XS, S, M, L, XL

[Buy From Patagonia »](#)

Best for Breathability

Lululemon Fast and Free Lined Short »



**PROS:**

- ✓ Perforated for breathability
- ✓ Lightweight
- ✓ Tapered sides
- ✓ Reflective tape for visibility

**CONS:**

- ✗ No rear pocket
- ✗ Sold out in certain sizes

[Buy From Lululemon](#)

These aren't your dad's mesh basketball shorts. The material is much lighter, more comfortable, and won't get caught on things. Though these are perforated like mesh shorts to offer breathability, the sides are tapered to provide more of a classic runner look. Elastic loops on the waistband are a nifty feature to store your shirt when you get too sweaty, and there's reflective tape at the back so drivers see you when you're running.

Made from recycled polyester and elastane, these shorts have a built-in liner that comes with two pockets for your phone and wallet. There are also two zippered pockets on the thighs.

You can get these shorts in either 5- or 6-inch inseams and either lined or unlined if you prefer to wear underwear.

Specs

List Price:	\$88
Material:	Polyester, nylon, and elastane
Inseam(s):	5- or 6-inch
Sizes:	XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL, XXXL

[Buy From Lululemon »](#)

Best for Larger Bodies

Tracksmith Session Shorts »



- PROS:

  - ✔ Loose fit
- CONS:

  - ✗ Must buy liner

- ✓

Available in a 5- or 7-inch inseam
- ✓

Large zippered rear pocket
- ✓

Super-soft Italian fabric
- separately
- ✗

Pricey with liner

Buy From Tracksmith

Tracksmith has earned a devoted following among runners thanks in large part to its ultra-smooth Italian-made veloce-blend fabric. Its Session Shorts deliver a classic collegial look that looks great from the track to the road to the trail. Available in nine colors, you can sport a neutral or try something more unusual like dark spruce or dark aubergine heather.

While the Tracksmith Session Shorts are a terrific option for anyone, larger runners will love the loose fit and soft material and the option for a 7-inch inseam. Those with thicker thighs may consider adding a pair of [Tracksmith Turnover Half Tights](#) or a similar pair of compression shorts to help with chafing.

Another big advantage to these shorts is the stretchy zippered pocket at the rear that’s big enough for your phone. They’re also anti-odor and antimicrobial thanks to a special treatment added to the fabric.

### Specs

List Price:	\$70
Material:	Polyester, elastane, and spandex
Inseam(s):	5- or 7-inch
Sizes:	XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL

Buy From Tracksmith »

## Best Fully-lined

### Bandit Cadence Half-Tights »



#### PROS:

- ✓ Long liner that doesn't slip
- ✓ Seven pockets
- ✓ Eco-conscious materials

#### CONS:

- ✗ Compression too hot for some
- ✗ Expensive

[Buy From Bandit](#)

If you're a sprinter – or just don't love the feeling of too much fabric flopping around when you're running – consider these fully-lined shorts from Bandit. Longer tights that nearly reach your knees should prevent chafing, and won't likely ride up either. The material, a nylon and elastane blend, dries quickly and features a ribbed texture for durability and visual appeal.

These shorts have a whopping seven pockets – four small pockets in the back for smaller items like running gels, a back pocket with a zipper, and side

pockets on each leg for larger items like a phone. There are also reflective logos on the front and back for visibility when running at night.

For those unfamiliar with Bandit, it was started in 2020 by members of the New York City running community. The quality of Bandit’s stuff is top-notch, though very pricey. Dedicated runners can sign up for a membership for small discounts.

Specs

List Price:	\$118
Material:	Nylon and elastane
Sizes:	XS, S, M, L, XL

[Buy From Bandit »](#)

Best Pocket Storage

Path Projects Sykes PX Shorts »



PROS:

✓ Three zip pockets plus an interior key pocket

✓ Lightweight

✓ Anti-odor and water-repellant

CONS:

✗ Liner sold separately

✗ Reflective logo is small

Buy From Path Projects

These Path Projects shorts have three zippered pockets for secure storage. According to the brand, the center back pocket is big enough to hold an iPhone 14 Pro and eight running gels, which is ideal for marathon runners. There’s also a separate interior pocket to hold keys.

This pair is made with the company’s innovative lightweight polyester that can stretch 360 degrees. Unlike spandex, which the Path Projects says is heavier, this material is quick-drying and antimicrobial to prevent odors.

Path Projects shorts do not come with built-in liners. According to the brand, pairing these shorts with a separate Path Projects [base liner](#) prevents chafing while allowing runners to pick their desired baseliner length of 3, 5, or 8 inches. So, if you’re a fan of no liner, or like this idea of a separate shorts and baseliner system, then these are a great pick.

## Specs

List Price:	\$58
Material:	Polyester
Inseam(s):	5-inch or 7-inch
Sizes:	XS, S, M, L, XL

[Buy From Path Projects »](#)

## Best for Cross-Training

### Ten Thousand Interval Shorts »



#### PROS:

- ✓ Versatile
- ✓ High-quality, sweat-wicking material
- ✓ Four-way stretch allows for wide range of motion
- ✓ Simple yet effective pockets

#### CONS:

- ✗ No rear pockets
- ✗ Not specifically designed for running

[Buy From Ten Thousand](#)

Men's workout shorts are a crowded field, but Ten Thousand has managed to box-jump the competition with its Interval Short. Incredibly soft and durable, it's no wonder why these shorts have earned such a cult-like following.

The Ten Thousand Interval Shorts come with a couple of pockets, including a zippered one for valuables. The sides have slits for ventilation, and the waistband with a drawstring allows for optimal comfort.

This pair stands out for how customizable they are. You can get them in a 5-, 7-, and even 9-inch inseam, and opt for a lined or an unlined version. If you select the lined version, note that the liner comes with a phone pocket as well as an anti-odor treatment. These shorts come in a dozen different colors, including maroon and black camo, giving you lots of options to express yourself.

Specs

List Price	\$68
Material:	Polyester and spandex
Inseam(s):	5-, 7-, or 9-inch inseam
Sizes:	XS, S, M, L, XL, XXL

[Buy From Ten Thousand »](#)

Most Stylish

Chubbies Ultimate Training Short »



**PROS:**

- ✓ Fun styles
- ✓ Five pockets
- ✓ Mesh antimicrobial liner

**CONS:**

- ✗ Fit small
- ✗ No option longer than a 5.5-inch inseam

[Buy From Chubbies](#)

Chubbies is known for its fashionable bathing suits, but the brand also makes eye-catching athletic shorts. Like the brand's bathing suits, the Ultimate Training Short stands out with short inseams and bright patterns and prints. The antimicrobial mesh liner is functional (it prevents chafing), but it's stylish, too. It contrasts with the main pattern of the shorts for a fun look.

In terms of features, these shorts are super stretchy, making them ideal for running. They come with an option to be even shorter than most on this list with a 4-inch inseam, or you can go a little longer at 5.5 inches. And, these shorts include five pockets – two compression sleeves on the liner, two zippered pockets on the sides, and one zippered pocket on the back.

## Specs

<b>List Price:</b>	\$79.50
<b>Material:</b>	Polyester and spandex
<b>Inseam(s):</b>	4-inch or 5.5-inch
<b>Sizes:</b>	S, M, L, XL, XXL

[Buy From Chubbies »](#)

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## The Bottom Line

The best running shorts for men come down to personal preference, as only you can decide whether you like the fit and feel. That said, we found the Lululemon Pace Breaker Lined Short to be the best combination of lightweight materials, versatility, and customization for most men.

## Things To Consider When Buying Running Shorts

**Size:** The goal is to not be thinking about your shorts when you're running. That means not pulling them up all the time because they're loose, or pulling the liner down when they ride up your leg.

Most men's running shorts come in letter sizes (S, M, L, XL, etc.). Choose a size that fits you as comfortably as possible and doesn't restrict movement. If you're unsure, consult the manufacturer's size guide.

In terms of length, which is referred to as the inseam, it largely comes down to personal preference. For Matthew Meyer, a certified personal trainer and running

coach, the shorter the better. “I really like a 2- to 3-inch split, which is too short for some people,” he said. “You’ll never see me in anything longer than 5 inches, I just don’t like having that much fabric on me.”

Shorts between a 5- and 7-inch inseam are most common, just be careful that they don’t reach below your knee or it’ll restrict your movement.

**Material:** These days, you won’t find many running shorts made out of cotton. Synthetic blends using materials like polyester, nylon, or spandex (the same as elastane and Lycra) are preferred since they wick away moisture, dry quickly, and are lightweight. Cotton, on the other hand, can absorb water and weigh you down. Whichever blend you choose, make sure you have something comfortable and soft – anything too thick can cause chafing or make noise while you run.

Unfortunately, synthetic materials like polyester or spandex are plastic products and thus unsustainable since they’re not easily recyclable. For instance, it takes two centuries for elastane to decompose in a landfill. If you’re going to buy shorts with these materials, make sure you get a pair that’s durable and long-lasting. You may want to look for brands that offer a warranty.

**Waistband and Fit:** A comfortable waistband is key to prevent chafing on or below your hip bones since that’s where most men wear their shorts. For Golowin, a wider waistband will put less pressure on your skin, and thus reduce chafing.

Another factor to look out for is whether your shorts have a drawstring. For Meyer, a drawstring is key as it allows you to add items to your pockets without worrying that your shorts will fall from the extra weight.

The main goal is to be comfortable. So, if your shorts don’t feel right when trying them on then they might not be the shorts for you. If that’s the case, some companies will allow you to send them back to exchange for a different pair.

**Lining:** Unlike traditional shorts, many running shorts come with a stitched-in lining to wick away moisture, prevent chafing, and replace the need to wear underwear. Linings can be in the shape of brief-style underwear, or stretch longer down the thigh like a boxer brief. Some even go down nearly to the knee as a half-tight.

Whether or not you should get lined shorts comes down to personal preference. Liners reduce weight and the tight compression materials keep your body in place as

you run. They also may prevent chafing on your legs when your thighs rub together. “In regular shorts, when running more than 8 to 10 miles, you have to apply cream between your legs to avoid chafing,” explained Golowin. “With tights, you don't need this and that's a big advantage.”

Sprinters and track runners also tend to use tights for aerodynamics.

A drawback of liners is that you should probably wash them after every run as you'd wash your underwear every day. This can force you to buy multiple shorts if you run a lot. A hack for washing shorts without much hassle is to take them in the shower with you and wash with cold water and soap before hanging to dry. The synthetic materials should allow them to dry by your next run depending on the climate.

**Seams:** Seams – or stitching inside the shorts – can be a major cause of chafing. This can happen either on the hip bones, where many men wear their shorts, or between the legs as thighs rub together.

High-quality running shorts will prevent chafing by having flat seams. Others may not have seams as the fabric is cut in a tube shape to limit the need for stitching fabric together.

If you find that you're chafing from exposed seams, consider buying a running cream to make your skin more slippery.

**Pockets:** Back in the day, running with your keys or wallet was a recipe for losing them as they'd pop out of your pocket. Big, modern cell phones have only compounded the problem. Fortunately, modern running shorts have innovative technology to allow you to run with your things and not lose them.

Many running shorts today have zippered pockets either on the sides, or conveniently for runners, over the lumbar spine to hold your valuables. With these pockets, make sure they're big enough for your phone, especially if you have a larger model. Other shorts have slots inside the waistband for items like keys and energy gels, and some have pockets inside the built-in liner.

While pockets are great, more isn't necessarily better. If you just run with your phone, maybe you don't need seven pockets. Another option is to buy a phone armband and keep your shorts lightweight.

**Style and Color Options:** The classic runner's look is a short loose-fitting short with a 2- or 3-inch inseam, but many guys might not be comfortable showcasing that much leg. That's why it's more common for men to wear inseam lengths of between 5- and 7- inches.

You'll also frequently see shorts with slits on the sides. These slits add breathability but are largely an aesthetic feature.

In terms of colors, make sure your shorts will match – or at least not clash – with the color of your shorts. The same goes for your [running shoes](#) since they can often be bright and with neon colors. Choosing a neutral color for your shorts like black or gray is a safe style choice.

## How We Chose the Best Running Shorts

There are plenty of brands selling running shorts, but not all are created equal. To narrow down the playing field, the writer of this piece consulted reviews and drew on his experience as an avid runner to make his picks. He also consulted with running experts to find out the nuances of running shorts and determine what to consider. Among them were Alex Golowin, a race director and head coach at [Running Expert](#), and [Matthew Meyer](#), a certified personal trainer and running coach

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Our contributors and editors have years of experience researching, testing, and reviewing products. [Joel Balsam](#), the author of this piece, is an avid runner and gym-goer who loves to test out the latest gear. A fitness contributor at U.S. News 360 Reviews (with pieces like the [best running shorts for women](#)), he has covered health and wellness topics since 2012. The reviewer of this piece, Marlo Jappen Porto, has been an editor at U.S. News 360 Reviews since 2022, specializing in the home and health categories.

## FAQ

**What's the best length for men's running shorts?**

+

**What's the difference between men's compression shorts and men's running shorts?**

+

**What type of waistband is ideal for running shorts?**

+

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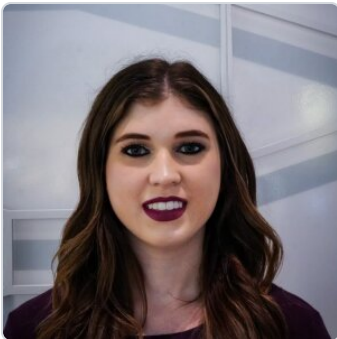
### Joel Lee Balsam

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Joel Balsam is a freelance journalist, travel guidebook author, and gear specialist. His work has appeared in various publications, including TIME, National Geographic, Lonely Planet, The Guardian, among others.

[Read more](#)



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