

These boots are made for walking

By gailkcsy | [Fit to Post Health](#) – Mon, Jul 23, 2012

By Sheela Sarvananda

Karl Müller, of Swiss descent, is at home discussing technical jargon and getting down to brass tacks on health issues, with his training as a mechanical engineer in his back pocket. A glint in his eyes and wry humour belie his serious and gentle exterior, but his focus on footwear and health is foremost.

The founder and inventor of [kybun MechanoTherapie](#) — a system designed to strengthen the feet so that it takes the load off the hips — was in town for the opening of the first store in Singapore.



These closed-toed shoes uses technology that supposedly strengthens feet. (Photo courtesy of kybun)

Müller recounted how, in the early 1990s, when he was living in Korea, he discovered something that would revolutionise the way the industry would view shoes. Living in a traditional Korean house in the midst of paddy fields, he would take walks regularly. And what he found in doing so was that chronic pains that he'd had for years diminished greatly.

"I played soccer in my younger ages and suffered knee, Achilles tendon and back problems. So when I was walking in the paddy fields, I could feel that this helped me," he recalled. "Walking barefoot on such natural ground helps the body. If you walk barefoot on sand for example, you would move your ankle much more. But flat and hard floors limit the movement of your feet. So they get tired over the long haul and finally, the movement completely dies. This is why older people move just with the hip."

Müller made the connection that walking over 'elastic' surfaces with a certain amount of 'give' was much better for the feet and body overall.

Based on the discovery, he came with [Masai Barefoot Technology](#) (MBT), a 'shoe technology' system that helped to transform hard surfaces into softer, more malleable ones with 'rocker bottom' shoes.

However, detractors have said the shoe does not have empirical, long-term data to support the assertions made. Still, the Swiss was able to sell his company in 2006 to an American investment company. The engineer and former athlete then came up with his present-day brainchild: kybun MechanoTherapie.

kybun centres on the use of 'walk on air' technology involving a multi-component polyurethane that is extremely soft, springy and fatigue-resistant. The material has been incorporated into the kyBoot line of shoes, as well as the kyBounder, a thick mat meant for standing on, over prolonged periods of time.

The kybun MechanoTherapie system supposedly eases muscular imbalances and tenseness, improving coordination by altering the forces acting on your ligaments, muscles, tendons and joints. Müller reveals that this was the rationale behind its evolution. Despite having little initial support for his idea, he pushed on.

"I knew that the future belongs to the 'walk on air' concept. You just have to have confidence in what you do, I always had confidence," he said.

Copyright 2012 Fit to Post Health

Copyright © 2012 Yahoo! Asia Pacific Private Ltd (Co. Reg. No. 199700735D). All Rights Reserved. | Yahoo! News Network | /