

# The Lakai Mike Mo review

Vulcanised skate shoes have been dominating the skate shoe market for at least the past 5 years. Basically, every collection from every brand features up to 70% vulc shoes these days. The reasons are simple: vulcanised models feature more boardfeel, have better grip and are slimmer. And last but not least, they fit the current fashion of slim jeans and basic styles much better than the bulkier cupsoles of the early 2000s.

A change to this trend is long overdue. In the long run, high-impact skating and low-profile skate shoes that lack support can't work. The skate footwear industry isn't the most inventive, to say the least, but still there is a silent trend towards modern cupsole constructions that have the same features as the vulc soles, or at least come close. One of these new models is the Lakai Mike Mo. This shoes comes with a new technology called XLK, which basically promises both the advantages of cup and vulc in one shoe. Mike Mo's first pro model is a pretty good fit for such a construction. He is a huge supporter of the cupsole and, as such, hasn't been spotted too often in anything vulc so far. Whether or not the reinvention of the cupsole actually comes through on its promises can be read in the following pages.

## Sizing

The Lakai Mike Mo runs true to size.

## Durability

The Mike Mo has outstanding durability. One of the main reasons why this review was so long in the making was that it didn't get destroyed during testing. Despite being skate in for almost half a year, multiple times a week, as you can see in the pictures, the upper still has no holes.

One of the main reasons for the long-lasting upper is the one-piece toe, made out of thick suede. Combined with a strong plastic reinforcement underneath, which stops the suede from forming waves that cause it to wear out faster, the whole toebox area is well protected against abrasion. The triple stitching in the ollie area ensures that the overlapping layers of material in this sensitive area stay attached to each other for almost the whole lifespan of the shoe.

The ongoing simplicity of the design also ensures that there are very few areas where the stitching could get ripped through. Towards the heel, there are just two more panels and the inner lining is protected from heelflips because it does not lean too much towards the sidewall.



The sole features a thick side area, which keeps it from getting worn down within a few sessions and revealing the stitching and interior parts underneath it, which is normally a weak spot of many other models on the market.

The bottom sole has an average deep pattern, which doesn't last for the whole lifespan of the shoe and becomes flat sooner or later, but it's still enough and the grippiness lasts longer than normal.

The slightly asymmetrical lacing of the shoe – if you look at the top of the shoe, the laces are closer to the inwards sidewall – extends the life of the laces. But this is the only lace protection, so they will blow out sooner or later. This is possibly the only weak spot of the Lakai Mike Mo.



## Cushion

The Mike Mo is the first Lakai model to feature the newly developed XLK sole construction.

The heel area consists of a red foam with big vertical holes in it, as you can see through the clear part of the sole, which Lakai calls "Equa-Form".

After the shoe was cut in two, however, the red foam turned out to be more or less the same as the rest of the cushioning, except that it is a little bit softer because of the evenly distributed holes.

In practice, the model has good cushioning features that stood the test during harder landings and bails. Although at first sight, the red foam doesn't differ too much from the white parts, it does seem to absorb shocks better and doesn't bounce back as much, so the XLK sole does its job pretty well. The thicker insole provides further cushioning and, together with the new sole construction, the Mike Mo turned out to be an adequate model for high-impact skating.



## Breathability

The Lakai Mike Mo features a breathable mesh tongue with suede on the upper part, which more and more models from many brands have these days. This keeps the sensitive mesh material from coming into contact with the griptape, so it doesn't fray out. Furthermore, the foam inside the tongue has ventilation holes and isn't glued to the inner or upper material, which makes it easier for the warm air to leave the shoe. There are also perforations on the sidewall and on the toebox. All in all, the breathability is not outstanding, but it is above average compared with most other models because the fact that the foam is not glued into the tongue and the holes allow more air flow over the instep of the foot than the classic, glued construction.

## Shape

The Lakai Mike Mo is quite a wide model and bulky to a certain degree, but in a good way. However, the toebox is more arrow-shaped than you might expect at first sight.

The area where the laces start is still as wide as the rest of the shoe but it then tapers fast towards the peak, which is mildly curved. The toebox area is rather short compared to many other models, which some skaters might prefer.



## Boardfeel

The Mike Mo has a very good boardfeel that can almost compete with some vulc soles. It is comparable with the Adidas Campus vulc – both are shoes with a balanced boardfeel, a good compromise between feel and protection. The reason for this is a very thin cupsole construction and the flexible sole pattern, which allows movement in all directions and adapts to the concave of the board.

The idea of providing boardfeel by making the cup sole flexible also reflects in the insole that features flexgrooves so, although the shoe is well cushioned, it's still as flexible as possible. You can test the general flexibility of a sole by putting your finger on the forefoot part of the sole and push a bit, the deeper and more easily you can flex the sole, the better for the boardfeel.

## Grip

The sole pattern of the Lakai Mike Mo consists of an improved herringbone pattern. Basically, it's a classic herringbone with extra divisions to add flexibility. For a cupsole, the Mike Mo feels very grippy on the board, even compared to an average vulcanised model there's barely a noticeable difference. Like many cupsoles, the XLK sole needs some time to develop its full grippiness though, so it's best to wear them for about a week before you step onto a board with them. A small weakness is that the pattern isn't too deep, so the grip doesn't last as long as the upper material. Since the overall durability is still outstanding, it's only a minor problem.

## Comfort

The padding around the collar is not as thick as you might guess at first sight. The Mike Mo is a medium-thick padded shoe and the bulkiness it has protects the foot properly, which most vulc models nowadays don't.

The tongue features a lot of padding though, which is also the reason why the shoe appears thicker than most. An advantage of this tongue construction is that even if you lace them loosely, the shoe still fits snugly on the foot and, with tighter lacing, it fits pretty much like a glove and doesn't come off easily. The lock of the foot in the heel could be better though, especially when the cushioning material in that area loses its thickness with time.



As already mentioned, the strong plastic reinforcement in the toebox helps make the shoe so durable, but it also has a downside. The whole area is very inflexible, which means that you should take care and pick the right size, if the shoes are too small, it can be painful if your toes bump into the front of the shoe while bailing.

The special insoles add further comfort to the model. They are not just thicker than regular ones and feature flex grooves that make them more cushioned and flexible, they are also ergonomically shaped and add support for the arch of the foot.

Last but not least all stitching within the shoe is very flat, so you won't get blisters in the areas where the layers overlap.

## Stability and Support

One of the main reasons for the great stability and support the Lakai Mike Mo provides is the thick, large big plastic reinforcement in the heel. It ensures the foot stays in place and prevents horizontal movement within the shoe, a feature that most thinner vulcanised models can't provide.

Additionally, the solid sidewall construction, made out of nubuck leather, stays supportive during the whole life span of the shoe and doesn't get softer with wear. All in all, the shoe features thicker materials that provide additional support, not just for the sidewall construction, which makes it a



stable model compared with the flimsiness of many other models on the market right now. The Mike Mo manages to provide a lot of support and comfort without having the bulk that cupsoles used to have during the '90s.

Although the width between lace eyeholes will not be to everybody's taste, it allows perfect adoption of the shoe to the feet when laced tightly. This also allows the shoe to keep the foot in place and stabilises it. The thick insole and flexible-but-supportive sole construction protects against primo landings, which can be painful in thinner models, especially when they have a vulc sole.

## Summary

The Mike Mo is a modern cupsole skate shoe that has a slightly bulkier upper than most other models on the market, but has good boardfeel, grip and an outstanding durability, which makes it worth the money.