

One week with...the Lakai Guy XLK

Durability

The Lakai Guy XLK features a one-piece toebox, as many models have in recent years. It reduces the possible points of attack to a minimum, which helps the upper section to last longer. In this case, the front resembles the look of an Adidas Gazelle, but instead of adding another



layer of upper material, it is accomplished by using just the typical stitching lines. On one hand this is useful for your orientation on the board. You see the stitching when looking down and placing your feet, which makes it easier to put them at the desired angle. On the other hand, the small holes caused by the needle while stitching the design turned out to be an easy starting point for a tear-apart process. After just five hours, a small hole had worn through the first layer of upper material, which is too early. Fortunately, the toebox features a layer of rigid plastic beneath the upper that, while unable to keep the upper from tearing apart further, should ensure that the hole doesn't wear all the way through during the average lifespan of a skate shoe. Another weakness is that the laces seem to rip through faster than with other models. After only two hours, the first lace had worn through. Like pretty much every other brand, Lakai shoes come with a pair of extra laces, so at least you have the possibility to replace them when needed. A positive aspect of the shoe is the durable-but-grippy sole unit. Even in the kickflip area, which normally wears down first, there's still a noticeable edge after 5 hours. This is a clear indication of a long-lasting sole.



All in all, the durability of the Lakai Guy XLK seems good, the tough sole unit and the thick, rigid suede suggest that it should last an acceptable amount of time, although the perforations in the front caused by the stitching are definitely a weak spot of the design.

Cushion

Although the Lakai Guy XLK doesn't feature a special cushioning element like other XLK models, it provides a decent amount of cushioning. This is for two main reasons. For one, cupsoles tend to be thicker and more rigid, especially in the heel area, which means there is less direct contact between board and foot. Secondly, the insole used for the Guy XLK is able to cushion heavy landings because of its stable foam material, which appears to keep its original shape for the whole lifespan of the shoe.

Breathability

Unfortunately, the model doesn't feature any ventilation holes. However, the tongue partly balances this flaw. It is made out of a very breathable rough mesh. It does fray easily when it comes into contact with griptape, but it lets hot and moist air, which especially can build up in the area over the instep of the foot, leave the inside of the shoe. All in all, the breathability is not extraordinary, but it can easily compete with most models on the market, since this aspect has obviously never been a top priority in skate shoe design.

Shape

The Guy XLK features a relatively pointy toe box, which gives it a good flick. The overall width is medium and should fit most people's feet. The thin, padded collar is advantageous in that it enables the shoe to stay close to the foot and offers a great heel lock. This is a feature that lately hasn't been a high priority of many recent skate shoe releases, especially most vulc models.



Boardfeel

The board feel is average for a cup sole model. The sole construction is very flexible when the insole is out, especially in the forefoot area, where it is needed. However, when the thick and rather rigid insole is in the shoe, the contact between board and foot gets reduced to an average level of boardfeel, but this is advantageous in terms of the shoe's cushioning. Boardfeel will probably get better with wear though, since all materials used will lose their stiffness and the added flexibility that will result from this will improve that adaption of the shoe to the concave of the deck, increasing surface area contact.

Grip

Typically for a cupsole shoe like the Guy XLK, this model has to be worn in for about a week at least to develop its full grippyness. Afterwards, it offers enough traction to allow a secure stand on the board, but the grip can't be compared to a "sticky" average vulc sole though. It is more of a soft grip that still allows you to adjust your feet and prevents slippage on the deck, so overall, it features a good grippy sole unit.



Comfort

Due to its very supportive heel area and collar, the Guy XLK is more rigid and needs some time to get used to with regards to the comfort. It is not an uncomfortable shoe at all, but the thin padding, and the direct contact between shoe and foot (which people should like), means that, at first, the shoe does not have soft, sock-like comfort. With wear, the collar and heel area adapts to the foot and you will get used to the additional support the shoe offers compared with flimsier, and thereby often judged as comfier, vulc models. Due to the previously mentioned cupsole/insole combination, the Guy XLK keeps the feet from tiring out as quickly while skating as other models do.

Stability and Support

One of the biggest strengths of the Guy XLK is the amount of stability and support it offers, something that many other recent models haven't focused on. The big plastic element and overall rigid materials keep the foot in place, provide an excellent heel lock and prevent ankle rolls. To sum it up, the shoe makes your feet feel save while skating. From the impression given during the 5-hour test, It is safe to assume that this feature will last for the whole lifespan of this model.

It is not just the reinforcement element in the collar and the rigid sidewalls that offer support, the whole cut of the heel area also does so. The collar shape, which rises high up in the area of the achilles' tendon, adds further support. This, combined with the previously mentioned properties, makes the Guy XLK one of the most supportive low-top skate shoes on the market.

Summary

The Guy XLK is a well-shaped, modern cupsole shoe with minor flaws in some areas, but which satisfies with solid grip, boardfeel and outstanding stability and support.