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# Remembering adidas' Feet You Wear Technology



If you think the present-day arm wrestle for sneaker supremacy is intense, by comparison the 90s would be seen as all-out war. An era of rapid innovation, the decade saw the sneaker world's big players introduce a smorgasbord of new technology to the market – some more memorable than others. Debuting in 1996, adidas' Feet You Wear is one of the brand's most significant sole designs ever. If you never got to feel why, you can certainly see why.

## **All natural, baby!**

Feet You Wear was developed and designed by third-party inventor Frampton Ellis, who licensed the new technology's use to the Three Stripes. His concept was simple: design a sole that mimicked the natural curves and shape of the human foot.

Moving away from the boxy-soled sneakers of the era, Frampton conceptualised a wider, lower-profile sole with an organic curve from outsole to midsole. The design provided improved stability and lateral movement, while also reducing the wearer's risk of ankle rollage – an all-too-common problem for athletes, especially basketballers.

Going against the maximalist stereotypes seen in other 90s footwear, Feet You Wear went for a clean, contoured aesthetic. Blessed with wavy lines and a distinctively stylish rounded look, you can see why many modern-day creators, including Kanye West, have fallen for those alluring curves.



Images with thanks to adidas

## Mamba Mentality

Making his NBA debut in 1996, Kobe Bryant came to the big league straight from the courts of Lower Merion High School. Breaking ankles and dropping jaws, young Kobe used his explosive athleticism and aerial artistry to carve out a rep as the hottest talent on adidas Basketball's roster, significantly raising Feet You Wear's on-court clout in the process. While the likes of Tracy McGrady and James Harden have carried the torch for Team Trefoil post-2000, it was the Lakers' number 8 that reignited adi's hardwood flame back in the 90s.

After a breakout rookie season gaming the Feet You Wear–infused Top Ten 2000, Top Ten 2010, and EQT Elevation, Kobe was bestowed with a signature sneaker at the beginning of his sophomore season. With its distinctive curved aesthetic, the KB8 – like Kobe – was a straight-up head-turner on the court, and it spurred the followup KB8 II and III in the years to come.

Unfortunately, in 2001, licensing issues between Frampton Ellis and adidas resulted in a premature end to the Feet You Wear line. Kobe would subsequently release other adidas signatures without the tech, but they failed to garner the same adoration. Not long after, Kobe opted out of his adi contract – whether Feet You Wear's discontinuation had something to do with this, we'll never know.



## Ongoing Legacy

Over 20 years since its inception, Feet You Wear's spirit lives on. Kanye whet our appetites for the 90s tech with the release of the ever-popular Yeezy BOOST 500, which utilised a FYW-inspired sole unit. Soon after, adidas brought Feet You Wear into modernity, unveiling the mind-bending Crazy BYW sneaker in 2018.

BYW – or BOOST You Wear – is an unmistakable ode to the iconic FYW sole construction, taking the bulbous build and infusing it with the all-conquering BOOST energy-returning foam. The end-result is one of the most striking court-inspired lifestyle offerings in the Three Stripes lineup, highlighted with a segmented sole unit and quirky lacing system.

Continuing the legacy, the adidas Crazy BYW III marks the latest remix of the contemporary high top, seamlessly mixing technical prowess and street-ready steeze. The Y-3 influence is also strong, with an undeniably runway-ready aesthetic hitting the design.

You can check out the latest Crazy BYW III colourways at Sneakerhub right now.

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