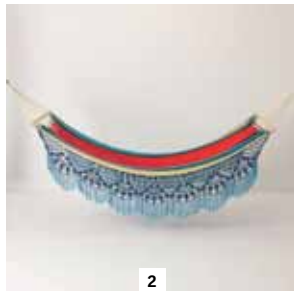


# NATURAL ELEMENTS

Pay homage to earth, wind, fire and water with nature-inspired outdoor accessories. Constructed to weather the very elements they evoke, these items will add fresh style to any open-air space. **BY ABBY HOFFNER**



1  
4



2  
5



3  
6



**1 OLIVE JARS** / Oversize olive jars in earthy tones capture the essence of relics dug from ancient ruins. \$129 to \$189, [www.crateandbarrel.com](http://www.crateandbarrel.com)

**2 TRANQUIL PARADISE HAMMOCK** / You'll swear you hear the ocean when you're relaxing in this hammock inspired by the vibrant hues of a Bali sunset. \$98, [www.anthropologie.com](http://www.anthropologie.com)

**3 TURF PILLOWS** / They're as green as grass. Wait. They *are* grass! Tossed among your existing cushions, these whimsical artificial turf pillows will certainly bring a smile. \$89, [www.grandinroad.com](http://www.grandinroad.com)

**4 RIVER ROCK STEPPING STONES** / Smooth river rock stones set on PVC backing bring the calm of a clear stream to any garden path. \$35 for a set of three, [www.plowhearth.com](http://www.plowhearth.com)

**5 BRANCH BOWL** / Adorn a patio table with this unusual bowl formed with silvery, intertwining branches that remind us of an airy bird's nest. \$60, [www.zgallerie.com](http://www.zgallerie.com)

**6 WILLOW CANDLE HOLDER** / Intriguing both night and day, five feet of wrought-iron willows balance 10 glass tea-light holders within their graceful boughs. \$299, [www.frontgate.com](http://www.frontgate.com)

# BACK-END SHAPE

When MBT premiered its line of "anti-shoes" in 2001, it was a revolution in footwear technology: rounded soles that led to improved posture, reduced joint pain and — could it be? — firmer legs and glutes. Now dozens of brands are offering their own fitness-enhancing kicks that will help you walk your way to a better backside. We compare a few of our favorites. **BY JESSICA JONES**



**SKECHERS SHAPE-UPS FITNESS JUNKIE**

**PRICE** / \$110  
Shape-Ups' "kinetic wedge technology" creates a natural imbalance that your muscles must work to correct with each step. After adjusting to the shoe, it's an effortless way to work out.  
**PROS** / Comfort, price, a variety of styles  
**CONS** / Bulkiness  
**FINAL TAKE** / The bouncy, comfortable soles make the shoe perfect for people who are on their feet all day. But we didn't see a major difference workoutwise.



**NGR (NO GYM REQUIRED) SHOES**

**PRICE** / \$160  
The idea here is simple: Extra weight equals a tougher workout. Equipped with removable 1.5- to 2-pound midsoles, NGRs burn up to 50 percent more calories than a normal shoe.  
**PROS** / Sleeker look, additional fitness videos on the NGR website  
**CONS** / Heavy to transport, can't wear (when weighted) during all activities (e.g. driving)  
**FINAL TAKE** / They added oomph to lunges, and our legs were sore after just one workout.



**REEBOK EASYTONE REEINSPIRE**

**PRICE** / \$100 to \$145  
Designed by a former NASA scientist, this latest entrant into the fitness-shoe fray also utilizes the instability principle, but the signature "balance pods" make for a more subtle option that doesn't scream, "I'm wearing toning shoes!"  
**PROS** / Discreet, stylish, customizable  
**CONS** / No additional health benefits  
**FINAL TAKE** / Felt a noticeable burn while wearing and balancing on the pods; love the look.

## NEED A SUMMER OPTION? >



**FitFlop Walkstar \$60**