

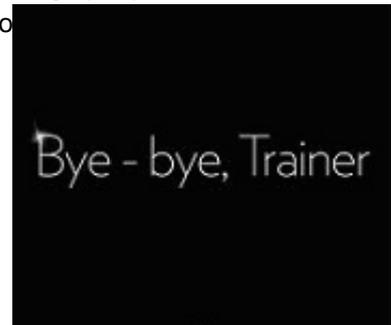
[Skechers Settles Over Sketchy Ads](#)

Local News

Posted by: David Haviland

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OLYMPIA, Wash. - Reality star Kim Kardashian, fresh from a sweaty workout, decides to dump her personal trainer. "It's not someone else, it's something else" said the [celebutante](#) in a recent television advertisement. After a gratuitous shot of one of the starlet's most photographed body parts and a scene of Kardashian glamorously lacing up a pair of Skechers, text on the screen says, "Bye-bye trainer, hello Shape Ups."



Might certain footwear — in this case, Skechers "Shape Ups" — magically burn off calories, fat and even improve circulation? A group of federal and state watchdogs, including Washington State Attorney General Rob McKenna, say unfortunately not. Yet Skechers marketed their shoes to have these and other benefits. "Advertising materials claimed that consumers may 'get in shape without setting foot in a gym' even though there's no good evidence to show the shoes work as advertised," said McKenna. "Don't cancel your gym membership. File these sketchy footwear claims under 'too good to be true.'"

A lawsuit filed by Washington state, 43 other states, the District of Columbia and the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) alleges that without having adequate supporting evidence, Skechers claimed that their "rocker-bottom" shoes provided numerous weight loss and muscle-strengthening benefits. Not-so-subtle advertisements suggested that certain flabby body parts would firm up just by walking around in the shoes. Rather than fight the suit, Skechers USA, Inc., the makers of Shape-Ups, Tone-Ups, and the Skechers Resistance Runner athletic shoes will settle the lawsuit. Skechers does not admit any wrongdoing and denies the factual allegations asserted in the Attorney General's complaint. But today the company allocated up to \$40 million for consumer refunds and will pay an additional \$5 million to the states. Skechers will pay \$117,138 to Washington state. About half will cover the state's legal fees and the rest will be used for consumer education, for health care purposes including but not limited to health-related research or education or programs directed towards girls' or women's physical fitness, proper nutrition or reduction of obesity. Under the settlement, Skechers is prohibited from making health and fitness claims unless it has adequate substantiation to do so. Consumers who purchased Shape-Ups, Tone-Ups, or the Skechers Resistance Runner should go to ftc.gov for information about how to obtain a partial refund. Consumers who have complaints about unsubstantiated health or advertising claims or any consumer matter should file a complaint with the Washington State Attorney General's Office: <http://www.atg.wa.gov/FileAComplaint.aspx>.