

By Stephan Reed

New Albany women create lightweight shoe designed for bikers



FOOTbrake creators Marjie Hancock and Jill Beckett-Hill

Breaking in Their Business

When cyclists ride for miles at a time, they want the least resistance possible. They only carry their phones, money and sunglasses, but what if they want to browse through shops or get a bite to eat? They don't want to walk while wearing their cleats.

New Albany residents Marjie Hancock and Jill Beckett-Hill, cyclists them-



selves, believe they have the solution. They designed their own brand of after-biking shoe called FOOTbrake – a flip-flop that folds up when not in use and is sized to slide perfectly into your pocket.

"Our idea is to make something lightweight that will fit tightly in a pocket and be comfortable to wear during a time out from riding," Hancock says. "The shoe is flip-flop style and is wonderful for bikers who don't want to carry around excess weight."

The idea for the FOOTbrake came about a year ago when Hancock and Beckett-Hill were meeting a friend who was biking through Napa Valley.

"I said to Jill, 'What is she going to do?'" Hancock says, referring to her friend's footwear. "I thought it would be really cool to have little shoes you could carry in your pocket. We wanted to walk through stores, and our friend ended up buying shoes just to walk around with us."

The two friends began drawing up models and talking to manufacturers in October 2011. They created a design, a logo and the final name.

"The name is a play on the words 'break' and 'brake,'" Hancock says. "With bikes, you have your pedal brake and these are also for taking a break in

action. We decided to use the red color throughout because it signifies 'Stop.'"

The shoe was designed with bikers in mind, but the FOOTbrake can benefit people who aren't traveling on two wheels, Beckett-Hill says.

"On days when it's really hot, all some people want to do is take off their shoes," she says. "It's perfect for golfers, runners and people who do destination sporting events and have to travel. It's also for beach-goers because the FOOTbrake is so small and compact. They can slip them on and hit the boardwalk."

So far, the feedback has been positive for the new product.

"One of our friends was biking to Indianapolis and could only carry so much on his bike ride," Beckett-Hill says. "He told us that the shoe was a perfect fit for his trip."

FOOTbrake comes in two women's and two men's sizes at \$24.99 a pair, and may be purchased at <http://footbrake.net>. So far, the shoes are only sold online and not in any retail store.

Stephan Reed is a contributing writer. Feedback welcome at laurand@cityscenemediagroup.com.