Lifestyle brand Saysh announced on Friday it has inked $8 million in its latest Series A funding round, led by Gap Inc.-owned Athleta and specialist consumer fund Iris.
Co-founded by Olympian Allyson Felix and her brother and business partner Wes Felix, Saysh said it will use the new funding to scale its branded e-commerce, wholesale distribution, and community-based retail footprint. The investment will also support an expanded product offering and the launch of several new activity-specific sneakers.

"This is an exciting next step for the brand, and we're so grateful to those partners who see the potential for Saysh to help shape a better future for us all," said Wes Felix, co-founder and CEO of Saysh.

"Saysh, at its core, celebrates women and their voices, and this funding further empowers us to lead in that regard. We are now, more than ever, positioned to understand and meet the needs of our customers, delivering more value than ever before."

Intentionally created by and for women, Saysh's mission to achieve gender equality can be seen via the company's debut product: the Saysh One, the first women's athletics sneaker to be built from the sole up for a woman's foot. In line with this mission, Saysh was seeking woman-owned, woman-led funding for their Series A round. Iris leads the round as a specialist consumer fund that bets on categories where women are the majority end consumer such as health, wellness, beauty, and education.

Athleta's investment was brokered by Gap Inc.'s Strategic Growth Office (SGO), a unit of the company that seeks out opportunities to fuel growth and accelerate new capabilities across its portfolio of brands. As part of the investment, Gap Inc. has acquired an equity stake in Saysh and Athleta has entered into a partnership to showcase the brand's footwear on Athleta.com.

As an investor in Saysh, Athleta continues its partnership with Allyson Felix, after the athlete was named as a sponsored ambassador to the activewear brand three years ago.

"When we signed Allyson Felix as our first-ever sponsored athlete in 2019, we knew we wanted to do things differently by supporting her as a mom, athlete and advocate," said Mary Beth Laughton, president and CEO, Athleta. "Today we are proud to continue supporting Allyson as an entrepreneur while fueling growth to the Athleta brand with our investment in Saysh."

Additional investors in the round included Redpoint Ventures, an industry venture capital with a 50% women early-stage team, and Springbank Collective, an early-stage investor in the infrastructure for working women and their families.

By Benjamin Fitzgerald

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