

Sizeless

Our Story

"Sizeless started in October 2022 at the Cologne Christmas market..."

How did three young guys come up with the idea of founding a kid's shoe start-up?

Leander and Alex, at that time still students at the German Sports University Cologne, took part in an innovation competition of the Swiss sporting goods manufacturer On on the subject of children's shoes.

Although both were still far from planning their own family at that time, they devoted themselves to the topic out of interest and sought out conversation with parents. At the Cologne Christmas markets, they talked to lots of families about their experiences with buying shoes for children. It quickly became clear that almost all parents have the same problems: **children's shoes are expensive, new ones have to be bought all the time, and neither children nor parents enjoy trying on new pairs again and again.**

After these conversations, the two searched online for existing solutions and were amazed **not to find a single truly acceptable solution to this problem.** After some consideration,

both stubborn to finally find an answer to this problem, they came up with the idea: A shoe that just grows with you - that's it! As a result, Leander and Alex decided to develop a shoe whose size can be adjusted. The flexible size adjustment should make it possible for the Sizeless shoe to fit over a longer period of time.

With this vision, the two students began to develop a first prototype of the growing shoe from old sneakers and recycled leather. With this prototype they pitched in Zurich in front of the founder of On, won the competition and received a prize of 4,000 €! Their first investment in the idea.

After the competition, Leander and Alex gained experience at adidas: Leander in the innovation strategy team, Alex in product management. In parallel they worked with orthopaedic shoemakers together, getting advice on the science behind good foot development and their concept.

During their time at adidas, they met Louis, who at that time worked as a sustainable footwear concepts developer at adidas. The native Scot was immediately enthusiastic about the idea and later became co-founder.

The team decided that Sizeless should no longer be a "side" project

and applied for the EXIST scholarship from the Federal Ministry of Economic Affairs and Energy and the EU. Louis, who had just completed his Master in Product Design Engineering in Glasgow, joined the founding team and moved to Cologne for the project.

The application was approved in April 2025. Since then, the team has been working full-time on the further development of the prototypes and the realisation of the idea. During this time, Sizeless filed an extensive patent and utility model protection, founded the company and found a production partner in Portugal who is just as crazy as us and shares the vision of a growing kid's shoe with the founders. Everything is aimed at market entry in the summer of 2026. Since the beginning, the team has worked closely with a network of industry experts in the shoe industry, the Cologne start-up ecosystem and Dr. Jan Goldmann, scientist at the Institute of Biomechanics and Orthopaedics of the German Sports University Cologne.

After almost four years of development and validation, together with families and children in every step, from ideation to product development, the market launch of the Sizeless shoe is imminent in the summer of 2026. With great joy, the founding team looks back on an intense journey with ups and downs

and even more motivated on what will follow in the coming years.

#GoSizeless