



## Mountaineering and Alpine Backpacking Boots

For the following courses:

**Summer and Fall Courses in Colorado**

This includes:

- Courses with these areas in the title: Continental Divide, Maroon Bells, San Juan, Sangre de Cristo, Sawatch and Colorado Rockies
- Alpine Backpacking Courses in Alaska
- Rockies to Ecuador Pathfinder
- Rockies to Utah Pathfinder



This document is designed to help you decide which boot is right for you on your course. The Alaska and Rocky Mountain course areas require a properly fit boot built to give you the support and performance you need to carry a heavy pack on snow, loose rock, soggy meadows, and hot, dusty trails. A good boot and a mediocre boot can mean the difference between focusing on the scenery or focusing on your feet. A bad boot could even stop you from completing the course.

On Page 2, you will find a list of acceptable boot types and models. Please **ONLY** bring boots from this list unless your course advisor approves other boots.

If you need help with the boot process, or if you have questions about models of boots not listed, please call your course advisor.

Expect to spend between \$200 - \$400 retail for new boots. Boots over \$400 are likely too much for your course, and boots under \$200 are likely too light or poorly made for your course.

Please be sure to try your boots on, and break them in. A boot that doesn't fit your foot or is not broken in will be very uncomfortable, even if it is the best boot money can buy.



## List of Appropriate Boots

Please only purchase a boot from this list – all of these are appropriate for your Outward Bound course. If you'd like to discuss other boot models, please contact your course advisor.

Men's Boots		Women's Boots	
Brand	Model	Brand	Model
Asolo	Avalon	Asolo	Fission
	Fugitive GTX Hiking		Tacoma
	TPS 520 GTX		TPS-520 or TPS 535
	TPS 520 GV		Power Matic 200
	Power Matic 200		Elbrus GV
Danner	Mountain Light II GTX	Danner	Mountain Light Cascade
Garmont	Tower Trek	Garmont	Tower Trek GTX
	Dakota Lite GTX		
	Zion GTX		
La Sportiva	Karakoram	La Sportiva	Karakoram
	Makalu		Trango or Trango Cube
	Trango or Trango Cube		Trango TRK GTX
	Trango TRK GTX		
Lowa	Baffin Pro	Lowa	Baffin Pro
	Camino GTX		Lady Light GTX
	Tibet GTX		Mauria
	Cevedale Pro		Cevedale Pro GTX
Mammut	Magic GTX	Mammut	Magic GTX
Salewa	Crow GTX	Salewa	Crow GTX
	Repace GTX		Rapace GTX
Scarpa	Charmoz Pro	Scarpa	R-Evolution Plus GTX
	Kinesis Pro GTX		Hunza GTX
	SL Activ		Charmoz Pro GTX
	R-Evolution Plus GTX		
	Fuego		
Vasque	Eriksson GTX	Vasque	Eriksson GTX
	Sundowner GTX		Sundowner
Zamberlan	Vioz GT		



Consider the following boot characteristics while shopping:

## BOOT DESIGN

### Boot Height

High cut boots provide good balance and ankle support for off-trail terrain and heavier loads. They are the most appropriate design for our course area. Mid- and low cut boots do not provide much ankle support, tend not to be built for heavy loads or snow walking, and are not appropriate for our courses.

### Material

- **Full Grain Leather:** Boots such as the La Sportiva Glacier are made with thick leather called full grain leather. This is the traditional material for backpacking and mountaineering boots.
  - *Pros:* Long lasting, durable, when cared for correctly, very water proof.
  - *Cons:* Heavy, requires a long break in period, doesn't let sweat vapor escape as well.
- **Synthetic:** These boots are made of lightweight, synthetic materials. Most of the modern technical mountaineering boots are made of a combination of leather and synthetic materials to reduce weight.
  - *Pros:* Lighter, more comfortable off the shelf, easier on the feet, easier to hike on-trail with
  - *Cons:* Less durable, waterproof GTX liner wears out within a couple of years.

## WATERPROOF / BREATHABLE LINERS

Waterproof/breathable linings, such as GORE-TEX, are generally denoted by a GTX in the model name. When new, they are great for keeping feet dry in consistently wet conditions (as we often encounter on course), and highly recommended for early season snowy courses. Boots with mesh that allow water or air to move directly to the feet are not appropriate for course. As noted above, these linings typically become less waterproof over the course of a couple years of use.

## SOLE AND TREAD

It is important to have a very stiff sole to kick steps into hard snow. Soles must have a heavy, lug tread that will improve traction in muddy or snowy surfaces. Vibram-brand soles are very reliable and of high quality. To test stiffness, try to bend your boot in half. If the boot folds at the laces it is too flexible (see photo below).



**The boot in the photo above is too flexible to be appropriate for your Outward Bound course.**



The following boot types are **TOO LIGHT AND NOT APPROPRIATE** for your COBS course:



*The Keen Targhee boot, above, is inappropriate for your course due to its lack of ankle support.*

- Merrell and Keen brand boots
- Boots with mesh
- Rubber ditch boots or jungle boots
- Day Hikers
- Light hikers
- 'Low' cut boots
- Train running shoes

## BOOT FITTING

- When boot shopping, bring any special insoles or orthotics you regularly use. It is a good idea to get your foot measured for its true size by a salesperson and to try on three pairs of boots before deciding.
- To start, fully lace the boots and walk around the store to get a feel for the boot fit. If you can load a backpack with weights while you do this, even better. If your store has an incline ramp, walk up and down it.
- While walking, keep in mind:
  - Toes: You should have some room to wiggle your toes at the front of your boot. It is okay to have your toes slightly touch the front of the boot, but they should not be pressed against the front of the boot.
  - Heels: Your heel may slip a little in the back of the boot, especially while walking uphill, but more than ¼" is too much. If your heel slips at all, try retying the boot tightly around the ankle or switching insoles.
  - Pressure Points: There should be no obvious pressure points.
- Your boots will feel stiffer than your usual footwear, but should still feel comfortable. If you are worried about your boots fitting correctly, ask the salesperson if you can wear them around the house for a few hours and bring them back if there is a problem.
- If you need to choose between a boot that is slightly too tight, and one that's slightly too loose, opt for the looser.
- Different brands and models have slightly different shapes. One brand may fit your foot better than another. This is another reason to try on many different types and brands of boots.



## **BREAKING IN YOUR BOOTS AND FEET**

Once you have your new boots, it is important to break them in. If you have synthetic boots or used leather boots it is not as important to break the boots in, but it is still very important to break your feet into the boots. You need to develop callouses and foot fitness that will keep your feet happy on course. Wear them around town, to school and at home, for at least two weeks before course. If you have new, all leather boots, hike at least 10 miles in them before going on course.

## **WATERPROOFING YOUR BOOTS**

It is important to waterproof your boots beforehand as well—there will be limited chances to waterproof boots on course. Use whatever is appropriate for your boot type, according to the manufacturer. Rub in sealer on all leather surfaces and stitching. Let boots dry naturally. Never heat your boots in ovens or near fires and heaters.