



Selecting your Backpacking Boots

Our course areas are rugged and require boots that are appropriate for the demands you will place on them both from terrain and the weight of a pack carrying all your backcountry essentials. Follow these guidelines to ensure a good fit and help simplify your shopping. The fitting information immediately below is most applicable for individuals with a mountain or canyon backpacking component of their course. All footwear is described on the following pages in the Footwear Glossary, along with brand names and boot models that fit into the category. Other brands may be purchased, but we just wanted to get you in the right ballpark.

BOOT FITTING & SOCKS

It's best to do your boot shopping in the afternoon because feet typically swell throughout the day, and this will affect the fit. You should start with at least two or three possible boot options. Put the first choice on one foot and the second on the other. Lace the boots up fully with the socks that you plan to wear — for example one pair of lightweight liner socks under medium weight outer socks (see your Required Clothing List for more detail). Start by standing on a downward slanting incline and try to jam your toes to the front of the boot. Next, take a walk around the store.

- Your toes should never bump up against the front of your boot.
- Your boots should be comfortable with plenty of room to wiggle your toes at the front of the boot.
- Your heel may slip a little in the back of the boot usually 1/8" to 1/4". Any more than 1/4" is too much.
- There should be no obvious pressure points.

Again, your boots should feel comfortable, but they will most likely be stiffer than the shoes you normally use to walk around town. If you're worried about your boots fitting correctly, ask the salesperson if you can wear them around the house (not outside – most retailers other than REI won't return boots once they've been worn outdoors) for a few hours and bring them back if there is a problem.

BOOT CARE

Break in your boots well before the course begins!!! Wear them around town, to school and at home, mow the lawn, go on some hikes! Wear them as much as possible (several weeks). This simple activity cannot be over-emphasized and will be one of the easiest and most important steps in preparing for a successful and comfortable wilderness adventure. If your boots are **leather**, waterproof your leather boots with NIKWAX, Scarpa Cream, NaturSeal, SnoSeal or a similar product, whatever is appropriate for your specific boot type according to the manufacturer. Rub in the sealer well on all leather surfaces and stitching. Let your boots dry naturally. **NEVER HEAT YOUR BOOTS IN OVENS OR NEAR FIRES/HEATERS!** Direct heat can **NEGATIVELY** affect a boot's leather, stitching, and adhesives and can easily destroy your boots.



Backpacking Boots:

Backpacking boots are the most popular off-trail boots sold today. This category of boots used to be known as Medium-weight Hiking Boots. These boots have shock-absorbing composite rubber soles, innovative injection molded mid sole/shanks/plates and soft, yet supportive, leather uppers characterize this category of mountaineering/backpacking footwear. Through the use of state-of-the-art materials, it is now possible to purchase a boot that is at once relatively lightweight, comfortable, supportive, and weatherproof and requires only a moderate break-in period. Medium-weight boots are offered in a wide variety of brands and models and work well for the majority of traditional Outward Bound spring, summer, and fall, mountain and canyon backpacking courses. ***VIBRAM (OR SIMILAR) SOLE REQUIRED. NO JUNGLE/WORK BOOTS.***



Footwear Options

On the following list you will find general information on all the boot types we list on the clothing lists as well as list of boots appropriate for your course and most commonly available. However, you may run across a boot not listed that fulfills all requirements or because boot manufacturers change model names frequently, a model listed is no longer being stocked. We've worked hard to find high quality options that fit our needs and cost less than \$200. Make sure you take this list with you to show your salesperson what's required and if you have any questions, give us a call. For the majority of these boots there are also women's specific models.

Brand	Model (s)
La Sportiva	FC Eco 3.0 GTX, Thunder III GTX
Lowa	Zephyr, Focus GTX, Tempest
Merrell	Phaser Peak, Capra, Chameleon Shift, Pulsate
Salomon	X Ultra Mid II GTX, Comet 3D GTX, Discovery GTX
Scarpa	Mistral, Cyclone, Terra, Kailash
Vasque	Breeze 2.0, St. Elias, Scree 2.0, Talus
Zamberlan	230 SH Crosser Plus GTX RR

Of course, these are just brands we know and like. There are plenty of other great brands out there, so don't feel pressure to buy only these specific boots. Also, if you own a pair that are within our guidelines, you don't need to buy a new set, as long as they will hold up for the entire course.