Prepper In Boots. What Kind Of Boots?

When a crisis hits, battered old sneakers, high heels, bedroom slippers, or other flimsy footwear will not be of much use. Your ability to travel over long distances and over rough terrain will be greatly shortened if you do not have good quality shoes or boots that your feet are accustomed to.

Are there any secrets on how to choose your best footwear for survival?

Yes, there are a few, and you are going the right way for finding them if you're reading this.

4 Types of Shoes to Choose When You Need to Walk a Lot

Whatever you choose, your footwear should be made out of heavy duty materials, and be comfortable to wear for a long time. Anything less could bring the wearer nothing but pain and suffering.

There are 4 basic types of footwear to choose when thinking about what to wear while hiking. They are trail sandals, trail shoes, mid weight trail hiking boots, and heavy weight hiking boots.

- Trail Sandals – You can safely hike in these sandals if you are on a well groomed trail. The average trail sandals have no support for the foot and ankle, which makes them useless for rough terrain.
- Trail Shoes – Are a great option if you are hiking in hot and dry climates on well-established and maintained path ways. The use of these shoes on rocky terrain should be discouraged.
- Mid Weight Trail Hiking Boots – For those who plan to hike for more than 1 day in rougher than normal terrain,

sturdier higher cut boots will protect your feet and help stabilize your ankles.

- Heavy Weight Hiking Boots – These boots are generally used for cross country backpacking or traveling over very rough terrain. Although some people like the new lighter boots, others prefer older style heavy built boots.

The best boots to wear for all terrain in a survival situation would be the heavy weight hiking boots. These boots will give the wearer good ankle and foot support and can be used in all terrains with confidence and safety.

Just remember, though, your feet, legs, and ankles will need to adapt to these boots. No matter which brand you choose, failure to walk in them on a regular basis is the fastest way to ensure you will suffer with sore muscles, blisters, and other foot problems once you resume using them.

Typically, walking two miles per day with 20 – 50 pounds in a backpack will give you good leg strength, and also ensure you know how to take proper care of your feet, legs, and back; plus resolve problems before they cripple you.

What You Need to Know Before Buying Your Boots

There are 7 basic parts of a boot: the sole, upper, inner, insole, tongue, scree collar, and lacing.

They can be made in natural or synthetic materials.

Sole

The bottom of the boot that is responsible for gripping the ground, absorbing the shock of walking, keeping sharp objects from penetrating the bottom of the boot, and cutting the foot. The sole must be stiff enough to support the foot, but flexible to allow a natural walk.

Deep sole patterns made of hard rubber will grip better on

hard slippery surfaces and will sink into soft muddy ground to increase your grip.

Upper

This is everything above the sole. The upper part of the shoe tightly holds the sole to the foot and also protects the foot from cuts, twisting, and pounding. The welt is where the sole and the upper meet and are firmly attached together.

The upper should be water proof yet allow sweat to breathe out.

Today, many people buy shoes made from synthetic fabrics without making sure the shoes breathe properly. This is one of the fastest way to wind up with fungal infections, blisters, sores, and other serious foot problems that can prevent you from walking for days on end.

Typically, you will know within the first day of wearing new shoes if your feet are sweating too much, or too much fluid is building up in the shoe.

Don’t rely on foot powders or other drying agents to take the place of a good quality shoe that breathes properly.

Inner

Padding and linings are built into the inside of boots to increase comfort and help with moisture protection and control. Padding also provides insulation and helps reduce pressure points.

Insole

Your feet stand on the insole. The feet should fit the insole exactly for proper support. A good arch support is very important because it braces the foot arch and keeps you from getting flat footed.

Once the arch of your foot flattens out, you will lose flexibility and experience foot fatigue much faster than before.

Tongue

The cover for where your insert your foot into the boot. The tongue allows the boot wearer to adjust a snug fit of your boot.

Scree Collar

Is located around your ankle area of the boot which is padded to keep loose dirt, sand, and other debris out of your boot. The scree collar should fit snugly to work properly.

If you tend to get blisters on your heels, or have sensitive skin, pay close attention to the scree collar. Even a half hour of walking in boots with an abrasive scree collar can lead to painful sores that will prevent you from wearing the boots for several days.

If you cannot tolerate a high scree collar, look for a lower cut shoe or make sure that you know how to pad areas that develop sores easily.

Lacing

Laces (boot strings) are placed on top of the tongue to tighten the fit of the boot. They can be made of natural materials such as braided leather or synthetic materials like

braided nylon.

There are 4 ways to protect the necessary holes punched through the upper to assist in snugging up the tongue and getting a good fit in your boot. They are punched eyelets, webbing, D rings, and hooks.

- Punched Eyelets usually reinforced by metal grommets.
- Webbing uses loops of fabric attached to the upper.
- D Rings metal loops riveted to the upper.
- Hooks are open backed pieces of metal in a hook shape that is riveted to the upper. Often used on the top 3 or 4 eyelets for Quick lacing.

The 5 Rules for Choosing the Right Boots

Basically, the following 5 criteria will help you in choosing the right boots:

- The lighter the boots, the less your legs work. Keep the boots as light as possible, but still keep the support and protection of heavier boots.
- The boots must be waterproof and also made of materials that let the sweat escape, but will not let water in. If

there is water in your boots it can cause smelly feet and blisters.

- Arch supports keep your feet supported and comfortable under a load. If your feet have no support, they will flatten and make long walks or hikes very painful.
- The boots must protect the wearer from twisting their ankle and stubbing their toes. The rougher the terrain, the more important ankle protection becomes.
- When you are carrying a heavy load, your boots should protect your feet from bending too far forward or backward while still allowing the wearer a full range of motion.

Still, there **are common mistakes that people do when choosing their footwear**.

Usually, they are trying to save money by buying a cheaper grade boot, with no arch support, or even not breaking the boots in. They do not do their research on the type of boots needed, or let a sales person change their mind to a different boot than originally chosen.

In trail sandals make sure all foot straps are sewn together, not glued together. Gluing is not as strong as sewing the straps together. Have no toe or foot protection. Do not use off well groomed short trails. Use only on short day trips. Do not forget to break these sandals in to reduce the chance of blisters.

In mid weight trail boots be sure the boots have good ankle and arch support. If not the feet will become tired quicker and ache sooner. These boots must be well broken in for about two weeks before going on the trail or face bad blisters and other foot problems.

In heavy weight trail boots the lighter boots have their following, but I prefer the heavy duty leather boots. These boots will generally last longer and are stronger. On the

trail there’s no time to find out that your lighter style boots do not cut the grade and fall apart leaving the wearer with sore and bleeding feet! As always break these boots in for a couple of weeks before you hit the trail to avoid getting blisters.

Let’s see a few other mistakes that are usually made:

- Padding in the toe and heel of the boot is not conducive to keeping a good fit in the boot. The longer you wear the boots the more the padding will compress and change the fit of the boots.
- Do not use foam insoles because they will compress and lose their support.
- When using punched eyelets with grommets in the upper, be careful not to rip out the grommets. This can give you a poor fitting boot.
- Webbing loops of fabric tend to wear out causing a poor shoe fit.
- D rings riveted to the upper tend to make painful pressure points on the top of the foot.
- If your boots use hooks to help assist in lacing, these hooks can fray and cut the boot laces over a period of time. Replace the boot laces when they first begin to fray.
- Do not forget to waterproof all hiking or survival boots. If you do not, the boots might shrink to a smaller size, which will cause great pain when you wear them.
- Do not forget to keep a second pair of well broken in boots with you on long hiking trips. I would rather have that little extra weight than to have to travel on damaged bloody blistered feet. You must take care of your feet on outback treks or suffer the consequences.
- When crossing streams or rivers, it is advisable to change out of your boots and put on rubber water sandals to protect the boots from being submerged in water

during the crossing.

The 8 Criteria to Get the Best Boot Fit

OK, you found the perfect boots, and you are about to buy a pair thinking that you're going to wear it till the end of the world.

Do you think that it's over? NO, because the hardest part of getting any boots is getting a good fit. Your foot and the boots will mold to each other over time during wearing.

- When you buy the boots, concentrate on how the boots fit not the size. There are many standards of sizing a boot: US sizing, European sizing, and the Asian system.
- Always try on the boots with the exact style of socks that you will be wearing on the trail.
- The boots should feel snug, but not too tight with no pressure points felt.
- Before you try on any boots at the store, walk around for 10 – 15 minutes in the late afternoon or evening. Your feet size changes many times during the day depending if you have been sitting or walking. This will prevent you from buying boots that you think fit you correctly, but wind up being too tight after even a small amount of time hiking or walking.
- A quick test to see if the boots fits right is to unlace the boots and put the correct foot in each one. Then while standing push your feet forward until your toes reach the toe of the boot. There should be just enough room to place your index finger between your heel and the back of the boot.
- Move your heel back to the rear of the boot and lace the

boots up snugly. Walk around for a few minutes to try out the boots to see how they feel.

- Remember that your toes do not ever touch the front of the boots. If you kick your toes into the floor, the front of the ankle and the top of your foot should take the force. The toes should not hit the inside of the boot’s toe section. If your toes hit, then your toes will take a continual pounding while hiking downhill, which can be very painful.
- To test to see if your heel will slip, hold the heel down with the toe section of the other boot. Now try to lift your heel. If it moves more than 1/4 inch there is a good chance that when you hike you will get a blister on the heel. You may try another size or look for a different type of boots with a different heel cup and arch design.

The 7 Issues About the Quality of the Boots

When examining the new boots, take your time. At the first glance they may look like what you are looking for, but on a second glance may be nothing more than a poorly made pair of boots that will not last the test of time.

When examining boots carefully check for the 7 criteria that will help you to determine their quality:

- When looking at the stitching, look for missing stitches, loose threads, and the neatness of construction of the boots.
- The welt should be tight with no spots that look loose or weak.
- Look at the leather thickness of the boots. There should not be any thin spots, cuts, abrasions, or uneven edges.
- The tread should be thick, tough, and be solid. If the tread is spongy and soft there is a good chance that the tread will wear out quickly in about two or three weeks.
- Check eyelets for durability and strength.

- Use braided nylon rather than flat boot laces.
- Check the smell of the new boots, they should have a nice clean smell of new leather, not the odor that something had died in the new boots.

Do You Know How to Care for Your Boots?

Today boots are made of many different materials. It is wise to use the manufacturer's proven way to clean and care for the boots.

There are 6 quite simple rules for caring for your boots.

- Always break in your new boots. Walk around in them until you feel comfortable in them.
- Always store the boots in a cool dry place. To keep the boots from absorbing moisture, put crumpled up newspaper in them. To keep them in shape and soft, take the boots out and wear them every month or so as a minimum. Just remember, though, your feet will need to adjust to the boots all over again if you do not use them on a regular basis. This can be as painful as it was the first time you broke them in.
- Make sure that the boots have new laces in them before setting out on any hike.
- Dry your boots gradually in warm dry air. Never dry them by a fire or other high heat source. The high heat can destroy the glue, ruin the leather, and cause you to buy a new pair of boots because they are no longer good for further hiking use.
- After each trip always clean and thoroughly dry the boots. Use the manufacturer's recommended conditioners to treat them. On leather use oil or wax. On synthetic materials use silicon based products.
- Before any trip always apply another coat of conditioner on the boots. Coat and work the conditioner into the boot seams to improve the water resistance.

Most people believe that it is simple and easy to buy a pair of hiking boots. In reality it is not. If you go shopping without doing your homework you will either get taken, buy the wrong kind of boots, or pay way too much for them.

Before you buy the boots you must know what type of terrain you will be hiking, know your skill level, and know how to maintain the boots.

Knowing the parts of a boot will also help the wearer understand how all of the individual parts work together to protect the wearer from damaging their feet and make their hiking experience safe and enjoyable.

*This article has been written by **Fred Tyrell** for Survivopedia.*