

General Guidelines for Fitting Hiking Boots

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1. What are your needs.

- Maintained trails, backcountry or mountaineering?
- Day hikes or extended trips?
- Carrying heavy back?
- Amount of water protection?
- Crampons?

2. Prior to trying on a hiking boot

- Have both feet measured length and width.
- Socks, same type and number you will be using.
- Talk to a boot fitting sales specialist about your hiking needs.

- Checking out Hiking Boots -

3. Outsole (Bottom of Shoe)

- Vibram® and rubber offer durability
- Lug sole for traction, smooth sole for maintained trails.

4. Heel counter of shoe

Firmness

- Firm heel counter prevents pronation (flattening of your arch) and thus foot fatigue.
 - TEST - by squeezing between your fingers.
- ### *Height*
- Higher collars offer more support but have a higher chance of causing irritation.
 - Make sure it does not irritate your ankle bones.
 - Padded collar may decrease irritation.

5. Torsional Strength

- A boot with a high torsional strength decreases the forces through your foot as you hike. If you hike in a flexible shoe your foot absorbs the forces not your shoe, leads to foot injuries and fatigue.
- TEST - by grabbing the front and back of the shoe with your hands and then twist opposite directions, like ringing out a towel. The harder it is to twist the greater the torsional strength.
- Steel shank/midsole offers greatest torsional strength.

6. Forefoot of shoe

- Best to have rocker-sole.
- TEST - when you look at the side of the shoe, the front of the shoe should slope upward (looks like the front of a rocking chair).

7. Shoe flexibility

- The greater the flexibility the less stability.
- TEST - grab the front and back of the shoe. Bend the front upwards towards the heel.
- Stable shoes bend at the forefoot NOT in the middle.
- Be careful your *Light* hiking shoe does not have too much flexibility.

8. Insole

- Removable insole is usually the best. Allows for use of over-the-counter or custom orthotics.

9. Shoe Material

- Full grain leather, greater durability and can be stretched by a boot fitter. Leather, slower break in time.
- Gortex best if hiking in a lot of streams or wet areas; however, other materials can be waterproofed.
- Plastic Shells best for glacier and ice tours due to resistant from cold and snow problems.

10. Seams

- Few seams, to prevent water leakage.

11. Laces

- Speed Vs Regular - overall personal preference.

12. Volume and Width

- High arched and wide feet need a boot with a larger volume, talk to your boot fitter.

13. Length

- Thumbs width between the end of your great toe and the end of the shoe.
- Toes should not jam when walking down hill.
- A boot that is too large can cause excessive movement and irritation.

14. Heavy Folks and Folks with Foot Problems

- Go up one level of boot stability.
- Stay away from light hikers, if possible.

15. Shoe Brand

- Best to try on more than one brand not just several models of the same brand.
- Boot fitting sales specialist have a lot of knowledge in what brand may be best for your foot type and hiking level.

16. Weight

- 4 pounds or less for backpacking.

17. Before you leave the store

- Make sure your boots feel good and there are no areas of irritation.
- Make sure you have worn your boots up and down a ramp to check for toe impingement.
- Examine the boot for any defects.
- Ask your sales specialist about waterproofing, cleaning and caring for your hiking boot.
- Check store return policy.
- Purchase hiking socks if needed.
- Blister kit?
- THANK YOUR BOOT SALES SPECIALIST.

18. Prior to going on extended hikes

- Break in boots gradually.
- Make sure you have no areas of irritation.