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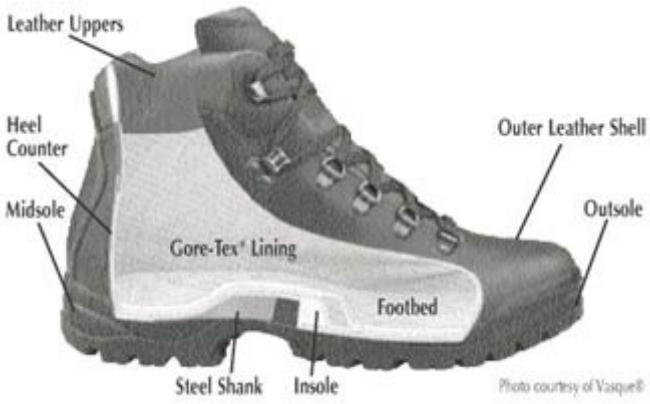
Feet First!

HTO carries a wide selection of footwear for nearly every outdoor activity. In order to help you choose the appropriate type of footwear for the activity(ies) you have in mind, we have classified our footwear according to its construction, materials and features. Please use these classifications as a general guide in deciding what footwear will suit your needs, then, speak to our staff about getting the perfect fit!



Walking Shoes

Intended use: Recreational walking and travel. Cushioned comfort footbed, durable long-wear sole, full torsional support from heel to toe, secure heel cup to eliminate blistering, preferred construction of a breathable upper quarter for maximum comfort, some element of reinforced midsole to protect against stone bruising, generally lightweight construction. Requires minimal break-in but recommend wearing for longer periods before long trips.

Ultralight Trail Shoes

Intended use: Suitable for general outdoor use, trail running and light hiking on easy trails. Often includes 'approach' type shoes or boots. Lightweight construction, molded heel counters and toe caps, moderate midsole to provide minimal protection from trail debris, frequently constructed of multi-pieced fabric and leather. Not recommended for any use which includes carrying a pack on your back. Requires minimal break-in.

Light Duty Shoes & Boots

Intended use: Trail hiking, general outdoor use and short duration backpacking trips with limited loads. Lightweight construction, molded heel counters and toe box, reinforced torsional resistance, moderate midsole construction affording some protection against stone bruising and trail debris, generally fabric with leather or split leather construction and multi-piece fabrication. Requires moderate break-in especially prior to backpacking.

Medium Duty Boots

Intended use: Hiking, backpacking, mountaineering and low angle ice climbing with flexible crampons and limited technical difficulty. Increased construction materials yield a heavier boot. Reinforced torsional resistance with stiffer shank, reinforced sidewall, reinforced pre-molded heel counter and toe box, reinforced and doubled midsoles, stiffer ankle collar for greater lateral stability and more secure scree collar, increased protection against stone bruising and trail debris, better ankle support and reduced risk of ankle injury. Can be leather or fabric/leather construction but must be reinforced. Generally full-grain leather with one-piece construction is preferred for durability. More secure instep closure and more secure collar. Requires extra break-in period.

Heavy Duty Boots

Intended use: Heavy backpacking and extended wilderness travel, mixed alpine travel and technical challenge, including technical ice climbing with flexible crampons (note: rigid crampons should never be used on any flexible boot) and universal mountaineering. Significantly increased weight of boot due to heavy duty materials and components. Full grain waterproof leather in a one-piece construction is standard, reinforced sidewalls, pre-molded heel counter and reinforced boxed toe, multiple midsole construction including a very stiff mid or full length shank, significant torsional resistance but even heavyweight boots will flex. Generally contoured heel cup for maximum heel security and elimination of lateral heel slippage, ultra secure instep closure and maximum scree collar protection, exceptional ankle support. Significant break-in period is to be expected.

Technical Mountaineering

Intended use: Strictly employed for technical purposes, including high angle mountaineering and technical ice climbing. Various constructions include heavyweight leather footwear as well as molded plastic boot assembly. All constructions are intended to be supportive, rigid, stiff and protective. Care should be exercised in fitting to assure that feet are properly fitted and blood flow is not restricted to the foot. Boot midsole is extremely stiff and will not flex. Ankle collar is fairly rigid. Requires significant break-in period.

Boot Construction

Generally boots are constructed with full grain leather outer shells, leather and/or heavy nylon fabric uppers, a footbed, insole, midsole for support, heel counter to hold the heel firmly in place, steel shank for additional rigid reinforcement and an outsole for sure footing. Some boots also come with a Gore-Tex® lining for waterproof protection. The soles of the boot are constructed to the demands of the intended use. Light hikers have lighter, cushioned midsoles, shallow lug soles and light gauged steel shanks. Mountaineering boots have heavy protective midsoles, deep lug outsoles and heavy gauge shanks. Each boot is designed differently for specific purposes, so please speak to our staff about a particular boot's construction.

The outer shell of the boot can be constructed of many different types of leather. Leather is still the most versatile, breathable, waterproof, sturdy and affordable material available for footwear.

Full Grain is higher quality leather than split grain leather because it performs better. It's tougher, more water resistant and more abrasion resistant.

Nubuck is leather that has been sanded and buffed on the skin side. Nubuck is popular because it does not show blemishes in the leather as easily as other types of leather.

Split Grain or suede is very common in outdoor footwear. Split grain is thinner and more affordable than full grain leather and is used when a surface coating, such as polyurethane, is applied.

Rough-outs are the bottom surface of full grain leather that is exposed on the boot. Rough-outs protect the leather skin from damage so that your boots will last longer and show fewer scuffs or abrasions.

Boot Sizing

A proper boot fitting always starts with an accurate foot measurement. HTO uses the Brannock System because it is accurate,
fast and consistently reliable. Even if you know your size, we recommend that you let our expert boot fitters size your feet for the best possible fit. Because sizing for each manufacturer varies with each style and pair of boots, we use this measurement as only a starting point.

A common sizing mistake is using the measurement from the heel to toe only. Sizing is important not only in foot length, but also the measurement of the arch length, from heel to ball joint. The arch of the foot needs to be taken into consideration for a precise and comfortable fit. HTO offers personalized,

customized, boot fitting with insoles at our Super Store locations to make sure you get a perfect fit right from the start.

Boot sizing is also affected by the type of socks you intend to wear on the trail. HTO provides wool 'try-on' socks and simulated hike ramps in our Super Stores so that you can get a feel for the boot's proper fit. The ultimate test of size is a comfortable fit, so make sure to test the boots out in our stores before you buy.

Only the Fitted Survive!

Photo courtesy of Tecnica®

The fit is everything when it comes to boots. Proper fitting is our task as a complete outdoor outfitter. We want you to enjoy the wilderness in comfortable footwear, so please allow us the time to assist you. Our certified boot fitters are trained by the nationally acclaimed Phil Oren Fit System® Program to make sure you get the proper fit and find the boot that best suits your needs.

When trying on a pair of boots, please follow these general guidelines:

1) Push your foot all they way forward in the unlaced boot. Check to see that the space between your heel and the back of the boot is no more than two fingers width nor less than one.

2) Kick the heel of the boot on the floor and make sure that the heel of your foot is all the way back and seated properly in the boot. Lace up the boots firmly.

3) Check the width at the ball of the foot and make sure that the arch and heel feel firm, but not harsh. (Heavy boots are more harsh and require a longer break-in period.)

4) Question all points of the boot that do not feel comfortable to you.

5) Check to see that your toes do not jam when walking downhill and that your heel does not slip when walking uphill. A small amount (3/16") of slippage is okay.
(Use our ramps or a step to check this.)
6) Walk around the shop for at least 15 minutes (the longer, the better) to let the boots warm and conform naturally to your feet.

7) Try a larger or smaller size to check the fit. Also vary widths if not satisfied.

Breaking in Your Feet & Footwear

As with all sports, hiking takes proper conditioning. The skin, the muscles, the padding and the bones of your feet must get in shape gradually. New boots are stiff at first and even a perfectly fitted pair of boots will blister soft feet. Boots must be introduced to your feet and it will take time for your boots to loosen up and conform to your stride. Please review our Return Policy on the back of this brochure before breaking in your boots on the trail.

During the break-in process, the boot leather will begin to absorb the perspiration and heat from your feet and the boots will slowly stretch and mold to your feet. To safely break-in your boots, wear them as much as possible on flat, smooth terrain without a pack at first. Then, gradually increase the distance and difficulty of the terrain. Be sure that your boots are fully broken-in before you wear them on a backpacking trip. Stiff leather, rough terrain and the additional weight of your pack will rapidly contribute to your general misery if your boots are not fully broken-in. Even if you are sure that your boots are fully broken-in, carry extra moleskin for whenever you feel a 'hot spot' begin. Moleskin will prevent blisters from forming at these 'hot spots' while your feet are adapting to the boots and the trail environment.

Waterproofing

Before you use your boots on the trail and periodically during their lifetime, you
will want to apply a treatment to the uppers of your boots to lubricate and give them water repellency.

Oil Treatments such as Mink Oil and Neets Foot Oil preserve smooth-skinned oil tanned leather shoes and boots. Do not use oil on chrome tanned leathers because too much softening of the uppers can occur.

Liquid Silicone Treatments will give water repellency to both leather and nylon uppers without clogging pores or altering the surface texture maintaining your boots' breathability. Swab several light coats onto the uppers allowing 8 hours of drying between coats.

Beeswax Treatments provide a more complete protection for severe wet conditions and the lubrication of the wax will prevent scuffing from tearing the leather open. Waxes should be massaged onto the surface of the leather after the silicone treatment. Using heat when applying wax is undesirable because it can seriously damage the boot by driving the wax too deeply into the pores, reducing the boot's insulation and breathability.

Boot Care and Maintenance

Keep boots away from heat. Exposure to direct heat (campfires, heaters, ovens or direct sunlight) will warp, shrink and harden boot leather causing sole separation by weakening the stitching and glues which bond the layers of the sole together. Dry boots at normal room temperature with good air circulation away from sources of direct heat. At home, dry boots on a boot or shoe tree or stuffed with newspaper. In camp, dry boots by suspending them from a shaded branch. WARNING: If boots are burned, scorched, or the leather has been dried by heat, the manufacturer's warranty is automatically voided.

Store boots in a cool, dry place. At home, store boots away from heat. In camp, keep boots inside the tent or sleeping bag to protect them from dew or freezing.

Remove dirt and mud from boots. Clean leather works better, looks better and lasts longer. Remove dirt and mud with a moist, non-abrasive cloth and let the boot dry as indicated above.

Take care of minor repairs such as eyelets and stitching before they become major repairs.

Footwear 72-Hour Trial & Return Policy

Because the proper selection and fitting of outdoor footwear requires care and time, we offer a 72-Hour Return Period. During the 72-hour trial period, we recommend that you wear your boots at home, on protected surfaces for short periods of time gradually increasing the time to an 8-hour duration. Please be fair to the boots and keep in mind that they were designed for your support and protection and will never feel like a slipper or tennis shoe.
If after the trial period you experience discomfort or just uncertainty, bring back the boots and talk to our staff about your concerns. If our staff can not solve the problem, you may exchange them or receive a refund. However, we will not attempt to stretch or alter any boots nor will we accept for return any boots that are damaged, worn outdoors or treated (waterproofed). Please see our in-store return policy for further details.

Hudson Trail Outfitters, Ltd.®
Maryland | Virginia | Washington, D.C.