

New Shoes / Boot Guide



Try Them at Home First

At Outdoor Action, you have the opportunity to try on any footwear at home to ensure they fit correctly and meet your satisfaction. We accept returns for exchange or refund as long as the footwear has not been worn outside, is returned in its original box, and is in a resalable condition.*

*This does not affect your statutory rights.

Ensuring the Fit is Correct?

To make sure you have the right fit you need to do a few tests first, these can be done around the house or in store.

Socks

- Before trying your footwear on again at home it's crucial to match the right socks with your shoes and activities. The significance of high-quality walking and hiking socks cannot be overstated. These socks provide additional cushioning to reduce impact, prevent blister hotspots, and are crafted from moisture-wicking materials that keep feet dry and comfortable in varying temperatures.
- Moreover, your socks serve as an effective tool for finding the right footwear. The fit of your socks offers insights into which shoes and boots are suitable for your outdoor activities. Therefore, when it's time to replace your outdoor footwear, consider updating your socks as well. Multiple long walks and adventures can wear down the cushioning and fabric of your socks, making fresh socks essential for maintaining comfort and performance.
- A good thing to remember is to avoid wearing socks with cotton. Cotton absorbs sweat, doesn't wick away moisture, and takes much longer to dry compared to natural materials. Instead, opt for wool, bamboo, or polyester socks.
- Choose socks that suit your footwear; for instance, you wouldn't want to wear heavy, thick winter socks with lightweight walking shoes.

Insoles

- Remove the shoe's footbed and check the space between the end of your toes and the front of the footbed, which should be approximately the width of a finger. For activities like trekking, mountaineering, or hiking, it's best to do this while standing with a loaded pack, as the additional weight can cause your feet to expand. If you notice a significant size change when standing, consider pairing your boots with our supportive Superfeet insoles, which can help prevent foot elongation and movement.
- Next, with your shoe laces undone and while standing, push your foot forward to the front of the boot and place a finger behind your heel. The fit should be snug. If your finger can't fit or there's discomfort, the shoes may be too short. Conversely, if there's too much room around your finger or space for a second finger, the footwear is too large.
- Ensure your shoe accommodates your foot shape correctly by assessing its volume—this involves checking how much space your foot occupies compared to the remaining space in the boot. Insufficient volume can result in tightness when laced up, while excessive volume may cause significant creasing at the flex point (where your toes bend) or touching of the eyelets during lacing.
- To adjust the volume, consider wearing socks of varying thicknesses, experimenting with different lacing techniques, or using alternative footbeds.

The Fit

- **Are they the right length?** Two tests can help determine this. First, with your foot positioned at the back of the boot, lace them up and ensure your toes are not touching the front. You should be able to wiggle your toes without them feeling squished. The second test involves pushing your foot to the front of the unlaced boot; if you can fit a finger between your heel and the back of the boot, it's a good indication they are the correct length.
- **Are they the right fit?** Proper fit involves more than just length, as boots and shoes come in various shapes. The key is comfort. Your foot should be held securely with minimal movement, but the boots should not pinch or cause discomfort.

Make sure you pay attention to the toe box crease. Excessive creasing in this area may indicate that the boots are either too large or too wide.



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Taking Care of your Footwear

Scrub them clean!

While it might feel like an extra task, it's crucial that after every walk- especially in muddy winter conditions- you dedicate time to gently scrubbing off any mud, grass, grit, and dust that has accumulated on your boots. Use warm water and a semi-stiff brush for this step (Nikwax Shoe Brush would be ideal for this!). For optimal cleaning, we suggest using a specialised performance footwear cleaner such as Nikwax Footwear Cleaning Gel or Granger's Footwear Gear Cleaner. Afterward, wipe off any remaining residue with a damp cloth for best results.

Absorb Moisture Effectively

If your boots become thoroughly wet, fill them with newspaper to draw out moisture, maintain their shape, and prevent odours from developing. Avoid the urge to hasten drying by placing your boots near direct heat sources such as radiators or fireplaces, as this can damage them, distort their shape, and lead to cracking of the upper material. Instead, allow them to air dry naturally in a warm room or outdoors during dry weather, away from direct sunlight.

Check for Wear

Regularly inspect the soles of your boots for signs of wear. If you notice they are losing grip, consider having the soles replaced. Damage to the boot uppers can compromise waterproofing, indicating it may be time to replace the boots altogether.



Re-proof Regularly

Boots require regular care and maintenance to stay in optimal condition. To extend the life of your boots and keep them adventure-ready, re-proof them every few wears in challenging conditions or when water stops beading on the surface. Knowing the material your boots are made from is essential, as different fabrics require specific waterproofing products. Please refer to our website or ask a member of staff in-store.

Full Leather Footwear

For full-grain leather boots, let them dry naturally before applying Granger's G-Wax with a cloth or Nikwax Waterproof Cream with its nozzle sponge. These products condition the leather, restore its waterproof qualities, and prevent it from drying out and cracking. To maintain the shape of your leather boots, avoid excessively softening the uppers by soaking them in warm water or overusing softening and proofing products.

Suede/Nubuck Footwear

For suede and nubuck boots, we recommend using beeswax-based treatments like Granger's G-Wax to nourish and protect the leather, enhancing performance and longevity. However, be aware that beeswax treatments can alter the appearance of suede and nubuck. To preserve the original texture, use Nikwax Footwear Cleaning Gel. Apply an even coating to damp boots, allow the treatment to absorb for two minutes, and then let the boots dry naturally.

Synthetic/Hybrid Fabric Footwear

For synthetic boots, apply Granger's Footwear Repel Plus or Nikwax Fabric & Leather Proof while the boots are still damp after cleaning. This helps the proofer penetrate the material effectively. Then, allow the boots to dry naturally.

