

Boots –Why Bother Me About Footwear?

Bob Johnson 2015

There are several pieces of outer wear that warrant more attention and are generally overlooked for various reasons. Boots are in that category.

I am writing this paper to help emphasize the need for proper footwear out on the trails. There are serious concerns and consequences if one suffers an injury, especially with the feet.



Typical running shoes – not for trail construction

Let's begin with shoes in general. There is hundredths of shoes designs used for multiple purposes in everyday life. If you play basketball, the assumption would be that you would purchase court shoes. Hiking –you get fitted for a comfortable hiking boot. Running shoes, tennis, football, baseball – just about every sport requires a specific shoe for their precise exploit. It makes sense. You wear the correct footwear for the right sport or job. Some construction jobs require the employee to wear steel-tipped boots.



Tennis shoes – tennis courts only

Your feet are like any other part of the body that needs protection when working outdoors. Eyes need sunglasses, hands need gloves, and the head needs a hat, the skin needs sun protection. The feet need protection and support when working outdoors on mountainous trails and such.

Feet need support around the ankle to prevent accidental twists which result in sprains or breaks. Also banging your ankle ball (talus bone) is extremely painful. Wrapping leather

around that area helps pad the rock bashing. Low top or high top boots are recommended for work on the trail. Another point can be made to invest in the right boot – that is, a construction boot versus your best hiking boot. Why beat up expensive hiking boots for trail construction when they are designed for hiking comfort? Spend your monies in cheaper construction boots. Actually, not all construction boots are cheap – but if your budget is restrictive – then look at discount shoe places ex: DSW, Famous Footwear, K-Mart and Wal-Mart for a boot that will take the punishment and save digging into your pocketbook.



Not really the best pair of boots for trail work

Other places such as Redwing boots, Sears, Bootbarn, Cabellas, Sportsmen Warehouse and such will have boots in a higher price range. Good quality boots depends on what you are seeking: better construction, name brand. Carolina, Carhartt, Wolverine, Lacrosse, Caterpillar (CAT), MUCK, Georgia, Timberland, Nautilus are all quality work/construction boots.

Safety is the big issue. Rocks tend to slip and feet are sometimes in the direction of the slide. You have to make a choice and

The opinions in this article are the authors and in no way make demands on footwear purchases. Clearly, an old pair of hiking boots may be relegated to trail work. Safety is the primary concern and the article lists recommended footwear as opposed to listing all the wrong footwear.

decide what personal risk factors you are willing to absolve. Most trail groups recommend 'boots' and are not specific. Steel –tipped or composite or no toe reinforcement is a personal choice and there are myths associated with losing your toes.¹

Hiking to the trail worksite may require traveling some distance. Broken in boots are advisable. Leather construction boots provides that additional support and safety in transporting you and tools.

Sturdy leather with a Vibram lug sole,² arch support, good lacing and talus bone protection is a better protection plan than – day hikers with breathable mesh and swede leather.

Socks are important with wearing boots (see another paper on socks). Try to wear thick socks, preferably wool or blended or even synthetic fabrics. Socks add comfort, warmth, support, and aids in stopping friction. The two sock method is good for some, employing the liner sock that absorbs most of the friction and sweat.



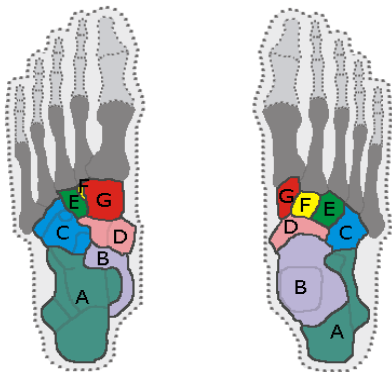
Steel tipped work boots – slightly used

In today's world, trail work has so many other safety concerns than to be focused solely on feet issues.

If you take the time and use all the available resources, you can better prepare for an outdoor trail outing and not worry about your feet. The choice is up to you.

- See more at: <http://www.learnbones.com/foot-bones- anatomy/#sthash.23GoAvJ5.dpuf>

List of all Tarsal (Ankle) Bones



A. calcaneus (heel bone) (2)

- B. talus (2)
- C. cuboid bone (2)
- D. navicular bone (2)
- E. lateral cuneiform bone (2)
- F. intermediate cuneiform bone (2)
- G. medial cuneiform bone (2)

¹ <http://threesixtysafety.blogspot.com/2013/01/mythbuster-steel-toe-boots-can-sever-or.html>
http://kwc.org/mythbusters/2005/11/episode_42_steel_toe_amputatio.html
<http://message.snopes.com/showthread.php?t=9221>

² <https://www.boot.com/bsoles.htm>

The opinions in this article are the authors and in no way make demands on footwear purchases. Clearly, an old pair of hiking boots may be relegated to trail work. Safety is the primary concern and the article lists recommended footwear as opposed to listing all the wrong footwear.