

buyers guide - how to buy boots

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Boots are essential for snowboarding, together with your bindings they connect your body to your snowboard in a secure way. How you are able to control your snowboard largely depends on your boots and bindings. There are different kinds of snowboard boots and different people using different styles prefer different kinds of boots. This guide we will work you through the basics of selecting the correct boots.

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Snowboard Boots - A Detailed Look

Before you start using this guide you might first want to take a look at our section on what Snowboard Boots exactly are and how they can differ. This will give you enough background information to use this guide to select and purchase a pair of snowboard boots.

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What kind of Bindings-Boot combination should I choose?

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As explained in our Binding Bying Guide, this will the most important question you will need to answer. Boots and Bindings are often a combination where not every boot is suitable for each type of binding and the other way around. These are the different kinds of boot - binding combination available:

- Soft Boots and Strap On/Flow In Bindings. This system is most flexible. Any soft snowboarding boot can be used with the strap on system. FreeStylers and FreeRiders often prefer this system as it gives more flexibility and maneuverability. It also the most comfortable combination when not actually on the board.

- Soft/Hard Step-In Boots with Step-In Bindings. If you are going to choose step in bindings for your snowboard then you will also need to choose step-in boots to go along with these. The Step In systems need to be the same on the boots and bindings. Step In systems make getting on and off your board very easy. There is a price to pay: Step Ins offer less alternatives and often cheaper step in systems give less board control.

- Hard Boots with Plate/Lever Bindings. Hard Boots in combination with Plate/Lever Bindings give the most solid and direct control over your snowboard. All body movements are directly transmitted to the board without padding absorbing much of this energy. FreeCarvers prefer these type of bindings/boots as they need this kind of control in high speed turns.

At this moment Soft Boots and Strap Bindings are the norm as they provide both a flexible way of adjusting the boots and bindings for a perfect fit and are most comfortable when not on the board. Step In bindings and boots are used by many, however, for their ease of getting on and off the board.

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How should I fit Snowboard Boots?

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The way the boot fits and holds and supports your feet and ankles is the most important part about selecting Snowboard boots. To try snowboard boots do the following:

- Put on snowboarding socks or at least the thick socks that you would wear when you would go out snowboarding. Do not try your boots with regular socks. You might not think so but the added thickness of the socks matter a lot when it comes to the size and fit of your boot.
- Loosen the outer (and inner if available) laces of the boot and insert your foot. Make sure your heel of your foot is locked in in the heel of the boot.
- Tighten the inner lacing first (again if available). Make it pretty tight but make sure your feet can still breath and you do not cut of circulation. Now tighten the outer lacing. Again pretty tight without killing your feet.
- Walk around a bit and get a feeling for how well the boot is strapped around your feet. Make sure you do not feel isolated painfull or stressful places.
- Now the most important test: strap into (or step into) a binding attached to a snowboard. Take on a riding position and move your weight to the front and the back of the board. Check to make sure the boot is securliy keeping your feet on their place, that they are not slipping to the back or front and that you are not experiencing painfull or stressfull places on your feet. You should feel both comfortable and securely strapped in at the same time.
- Lean forward and make sure your heel is not lifted but that the entire boot, binding and board are making the forward move without your heel slipping out of the heel of the boot. Heel lift is one of the most important things to check on when buying boots so ensure that your heel is not slipping out of the boot's heel!
- When you try on boots try to take into account that as you use the boots more often, the inner bladder will get more compact because of the pressure that the bladder will be exposed to. So the boot will become less tight as you use it more. Try to anticipate this by buying boots that are slightly tight.

You will notice how Snowboard Boots come in all regular shoe sizes but you will also notice how different boots of the same size can differ in the way they hold your feet and ankle. Make sure to try on many boots and only buy one that you are 100% sure of. Good snowboard boots can last you a long time so you will want to take your time and spend some money on this

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