

buyers guide - what are snowboard boots

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As explained in the bindings section, snowboard boots and bindings form a combination that keeps your body attached to your snowboard. Good snowboard boots should give you maximum control over your board, protect your feet and ankles from the pressures of high speed turns and keep your feet warm and breathing in all weather conditions. A good fit between your boots and bindings are essential for good snowboarding. Boots come in many variations and styles. We will discuss the most common ones in this section:

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Soft Boots

Soft boots are most comfortable and can be used with highback bindings and flow in bindings. They consist of two parts: an inner bladder and an outer boot. The inner bladder is padded to keep your feet warm, dry and protected from heavy impacts. It usually has its own lacing so you can tighten the inner bladder independently from the outer boot. The outer boot has a sturdy upper part that allows for ankle movement. The outer lacing allows for further tightening the boots. In contrast to hard boots and skiing boots, softboots are pretty comfortable for walking when not on the board. They are preferred by freestylers and freeriders. Softboots are most popular at the moment.

Hard Boots

Hard boots most resemble the traditional skiing boots. They also have a padded inner bladder similar to the ones in soft boots. The outer shell however is made out of hard plastic. The outer shell is closed using buckles or ratchet bails. To provide some flexibility hinges are often built into the ankles to allow some movement. The soles of hard boots often have the mechanism that allows them to be connected to plate bindings. Hard boots are used with plate bindings mostly by alpine racers who want their movement to be directly transferred through the hard boots and bindings onto the board. Hard boots are pretty specific and seriously lessen your freedom in choice. You will need to find an exact match between the binding mechanism and the hard boot mechanism.

Hybrid Step-In Boots

These boots combine the flexible, soft upper part of soft boots with the sturdy hard soles of hard boots. They are used in combination with step in bindings. People who are looking for a mix between the comfort and flexibility of a softboot and the control of hard boots will often opt for a hybrid step-in boot. As with hard boots you will need to find a match between the step in binding mechanism and the boot mechanism.