

Basics of Snowshoeing

Snowshoe Attire:

Clothing must be appropriate to the weather conditions. It is best to dress in layers so you can add or subtract clothes as needed. Always bring too many clothes instead of too few.

Socks

It is suggested that a wool or blended-material ski or hiking sock be used for snowshoeing. It is recommended that liner socks made of synthetic or natural fibers be worn underneath insulated socks. The liners will help wick away perspiration and moisture from the foot and add more insulation layers of air. The liners will also absorb the friction between the feet and outer socks to prevent blisters.

Footwear

Any type of shoe can be used for snowshoeing. Lightweight shoes such as running shoes are popular for snowshoe athletes.

The heavier the shoe, the more weight the back will feel while running.

Boots may be used in colder weather, but be sure that there is flexibility in the ankles and that the boot can remain securely attached to the foot while walking and running.



i: Boots for snowshoeing

The most important thing is to keep the feet dry and comfortable. It is recommended that the shoes fit comfortably with the socks that will be worn while snowshoeing.

The key in snowshoeing is that the boot or shoe is the interface with the snowshoe. The snowshoer's warmth comes from the exercise and layering, rather than bulky boots.



Pants and Tops

Incorporate the three-layer system.

1. Inside Layer

The inside (or inner or base) layer is the wicking layer. Long underwear made of synthetic materials, natural materials (silk) or treated materials will remove perspiration from the body. A wicking layer should cover both the upper and lower body. A shirt that covers the neck and fits snugly at the wrists is an effective way to conserve body heat.

ii: Shoe attached to a snowshoe

2. Middle Layer

The middle layer should be an insulating layer and consist of wool (sweater or pants), fleece (top or bottom) or treated material. Synthetic insulations or phase change treatments have also proven to be lightweight but very effective. This layer provides warmth by trapping a layer of air around the body.

NOTE: Except in extremely cold conditions, the legs do not need and would be constricted by this layer.

3. Outer Layer

Wind and snow are blocked by the weatherproof outer layer. For the legs, nylon wind pants are good. If wind pants are not available, choose looser-fitting synthetic sweatpants.

A lined windbreaker or warm-up jacket works well on top. Clothing that uses laminates that are waterproof, windproof and breathable (allowing perspiration to leave the body) can be useful. Snowshoes tend to kick up loose snow on the legs and back, and this is best shed by a slick and smooth nylon outer layer.

When deciding upon clothing for competition, consider the ability of your athlete, the weather and the distance of the event. For optimal competition, strive to dress your athlete in clothing that is lightweight, breathable, layered and slick on the outer surface, and that allows unrestrictive movement.



Accessories

Additional accessories can be beneficial for snowshoe athletes during training and competition. Accessories such as:

1. Hats
2. Gloves
3. Goggles/Sunglasses



iv: Gloves



v: Goggles



iii: Polarized Sunglasses