Snowshoeing Equipment:

Securing proper equipment is essential for good, safe snowshoeing, so getting the correct type of snowshoe is the most important decision to make. There are two types of snowshoes: traditional wooden-framed snowshoes and metal snowshoes which are made from aluminum, rubber, and other "high tech" materials. To be competitive, it is recommended that a snowshoe specifically produced for competition be used.

Snowshoes

Shoe weight and size are critical in snowshoeing. A narrower frame is better to keep the weight centered and the legs directly beneath the torso.

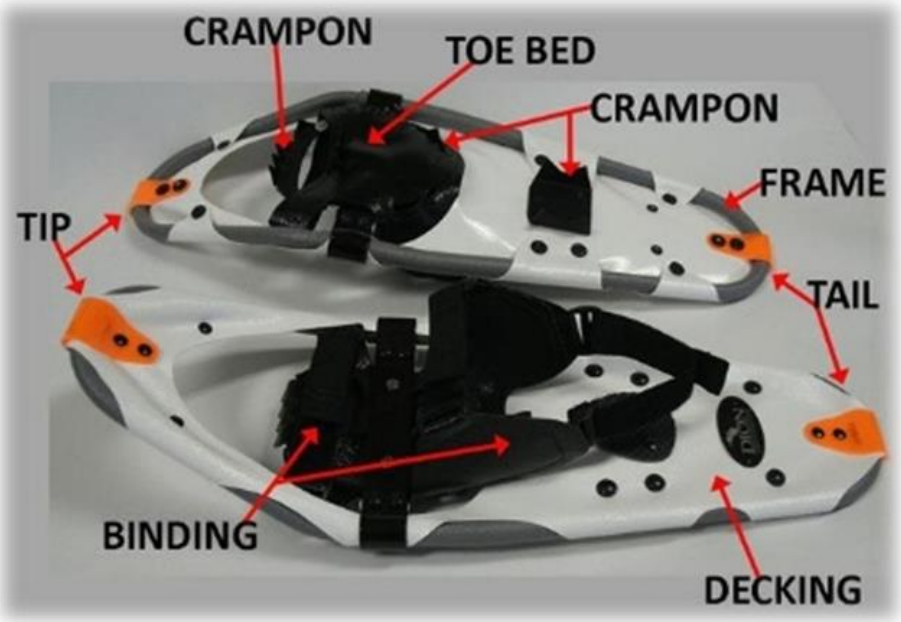
Everyone will sink in dry, powdery snow no matter how big the snowshoes are, but even the heaviest athlete will be able to snowshoe in moist, compacted snow in smaller shoes. Keep the snowshoe as small as possible for the snow conditions.

The Official Special Olympics Rules for Snowshoeing state that the snowshoe frame shall not be smaller than 17.78 cm x 50.8cm (7 inches x 20 inches). This size works best for most adults.

vi: Different material snowshoes

vii: Snowshoe

Snowshoe Anatomy



Frame

- This is the outside of the snowshoe that gives it shape.
- It is made of aluminum, wood or synthetic materials
- In a symmetrical or asymmetrical form.
    - The symmetrical frame centers the foot in the middle of the shoe
    - The asymmetrical frame is more in the shape of the foot, with a right and left shoe, allowing the feet to be closer together and eliminating the "snowshoe waddle."

- The toe of the frame is raised up
- The tail is weighted to ensure better movement and make sure that snow does not collapse on the shoe.
- Generally, the smallest frame that allows flotation on the snow is best for racing.

Binding System

This secures the athlete's shoe to the snowshoe. Look for a solid landing platform, little movement inside the binding, comfort and no contact with the frame.

Pivot System

This allows for normal walking motion. There is a hole in the decking that allows the toe of the foot to go into the snow and push off while the frame remains on the surface of the snow. The pivot system on a wooden showshoe is formed when the binding is attached to the snowshoe.

Toe Cords

Toe cords are the part of snowshoes that connect the outer frame to the binding.

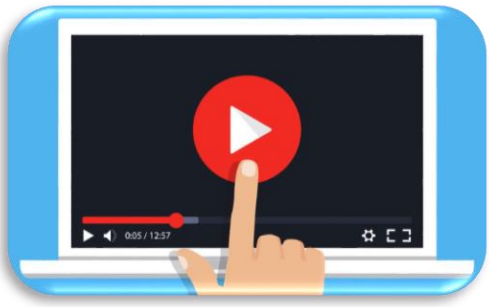
Crampons/ Cleats or Claws (Metal Snowshoe Only)

Spikes and claws grab the snow and provide traction when conditions are slippery. They are located beneath the binding, which also allows them to aid in pushing off. Rear traction devices under the snowshoe where the heel strikes are important for downhill traction and safety.

Putting on Snowshoes

Most modern snowshoes have nylon strap binding systems. Allow athletes to master the binding systems in warm, dry indoor areas before doing it on snow.

It is important to note that your athletes should not move on hard surfaces with snowshoes on.



Click here to watch a video on Putting on Snowshoes