SOME HINTS FOR SUCCESSFUL SNOWSHOEING

Technique:

Snowshoeing is as easy as walking. The beginning snowshoer should be ready to head out on the trail in minutes. After learning some simple techniques, a wide range of terrain becomes immediately accessible.

Here are some easy techniques that all snowshoers should learn:

Climbing-

To ascend a slope, kick the front of your snowshoe into the snow and press down to compact it into a step. To avoid collapse, always make sure that each new step is sufficiently above the last one.

Descending-

Heel cleats are the key to an easy descent. Try to keep your knees bent slightly, lean back, and keep your weight on your heel cleats in order to maintain control.

Edging-

An important technique for traversing a slope is to simply kick the side of the shoe into the hillside engaging the cleats. Swing the boot heel hard towards the uphill slope, then stomp down securing the snowshoe edge in the slope. Poles are very helpful while edging.

Breaking Trail-

Walk in a single line behind the leaders trail. When its your turn to lead take consistent even steps that are easy for everyone who is following.

Setting up Camp-

Use your snowshoes to pack the snow surrounding your campsite. If you need to dig you can use your snowshoes as a shovel.

What To Look For When Choosing snowshoes:

The first step in choosing a snowshoe is to determine your needs.
Keep one overall goal in mind:

Get the smallest and most comfortable snowshoe that will satisfy your needs.

Pay attention to the following 3 things when purchasing your snowshoes:

1. Floatation

To keep the surface area of the snowshoe from sinking into the snow, flotation is created by the surface area of the decking. Be aware that the decking of some snowshoes is more efficient than others. Traditional snowshoes use a webbed or laced system of rawhide which is not as efficient as some of the more modern snowshoes with a solid deck.

2. Traction

Snowshoes usually have some type of traction device or cleat. Most are sold with a cleat; but some manufacturers sell them as an accessory (you will want to clarify this when buying). These cleats will quickly become invaluable to you. They offer traction on icy or steep terrain and allow you to maneuver with confidence in a range of conditions.

3. Harness and Binding

This is a critical area of the snowshoe that connects your foot to the snowshoe itself. You will want to look for comfort and durability. To check durability, inspect material and craftsmanship. Look for strong materials that will stand up to a lot of abuse.

Most Frequently Asked Questions.

What size shoe is right for me?

A: Snow differs greatly from one location to another and from one time of year to the next. Heavier (wet) or icy snow conditions require smaller snowshoes with very good traction. Lighter (drier) snow requires a larger snowshoe.

What kind of terrain will you be snowshoeing on?

A: Steep terrain requires a small maneuverable snowshoe with substantial cleats. Flat terrain will require more floatation, achieved with a larger snowshoe.

What activities will you be doing with the snowshoes?

A: Casual hiking, walking and running will require a smaller snowshoe than in used for snow camping and backpacking.

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THE MODERN SNOWSHOE: ANATOMY + TERMS

The Modern Snowshoe

The modern craft of snowshoe construction owes a great debt to the snowshoe makers of the past. Their legacy is a traditional respect for the materials whether hardwood or metal alloy. Today, snowshoers have a wide range of products from which to choose. But while materials may differ there are some important things to look for in any snowshoe you choose.

T.I.G.. Welded Seams-

The only welded frame you can buy. Each weld is done by hand to ensure incomparable strength and durability.

Patented Rear Heelcleat-

This is featured on all ATLAS shoes and provides exceptional stability, traction and security on downhill and traverses.

Alloy Frame-

Using aircraft quality aluminum, with an electrostatic powder coating process, frames are extremely lightweight and strong.

Patented Spring Loaded Binding-

The binding lifts the nose of the snowshoe with every step, overcoming obstacles and allowing for an easy, natural stride.

Hypalon-

Custom fabric made especially for ATLAS, it provides efficient flotation, easily shedding ice and snow, while remaining frost-free and puncture resistant.

Snowshoe Anatomy

Frame

The material that makes up the skeletal shape of the shoe and can either be made of wood or metal. It serves to suspend the decking material of the shoe and acts as the seat for both the binding and the crampons. A strong frame is essential not only for the durability of the shoe but also for its performance.

Decking

The material that comprises the surface area of the shoe. This the part of the shoe that keeps you from sinking into the snow. It can either be solid or webbed and can be made from a wide range of materials.

Cleat

The teeth that are on the bottom of the shoe that provide traction, and allow for more confident stepping. Cleats are an important accessory and come as either a standard feature or can be purchased and attached later.

Harness & Binding

The section of the shoe that attaches your foot to the snowshoe itself. Look for the most comfortable binding system. Remember if it is uncomfortable now, it may cause problems later.

Drag

The amount that the rear of the shoe remains on the snow as you stride forward. Generally the less drag the better.

What to look for

1. Your snowshoes should have a strong light- weight frame, for ease of use and durability.
2. The decking, whether made of webbing or a solid piece of material, should keep you afloat while snowshoeing.
3. Ideally, your snowshoes should have integrated cleats, for added traction, as a standard feature.
4. Your bindings should be comfortable and secure.

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