

save your soles

Here's a useful checklist for DofE participants to take care of their boots and feet on an expedition. There is more expedition advice in the **Expedition Guide** and in the **DofE Kit Guide** for participants and parents at www.DofEShopping.org/kit-guide.

Choosing your boots

Remember all boots need to have ankle support.

Borrowing boots – it is possible to use someone else's old boots to save money. To help with fitting:

- Get a professional fitting (insoles can often make a boot fit much better and are a cheap addition).
- Test a range of socks to get a snug fit.
- Try different lacing techniques.

Buying boots – You can get a free professional fitting when buying new boots from shops like Cotswold Outdoors. They will help you find the right boot for your DofE expedition. Before you buy, check out all the advice on page eight of the *DofE Kit Guide* and our boots advice page at www.DofEShopping.org/boots.

Remember to wear your boots regularly before your expedition to 'break them' in and get used to them – perhaps walking to and from school or after-school clubs and youth groups?



Experiment with different ways of tying laces to make the boot more comfortable.

With thanks to Berghaus, Vango and Bridgedale for their helpful hints and tips. www.DofEShopping.org/kitadvice

At the start of your expedition

Work through this checklist to look after your feet:

	Wash and dry your feet thoroughly
	Cut your nails using straight scissors and check there are no bits of gravel in your boots and any rough seams are covered/smoothed.
	Take a blister kit. Prevention is better than cure so put some plasters on where you have had blisters before to protect your feet from the very start of your expedition.
	Wearing two pairs of socks (one thin, one thick) can significantly reduce friction in the boot and help prevent blisters. It's worth investing in good expedition socks, but thick sports socks will do to save money – don't wear cotton socks .
	It's best to take as many socks as expedition days so you have a clean, dry pair every day, (always take at least two pairs).
	When tying the laces it may be more comfortable to lace to the top of the boot and then come back down one level and tie the bow there, it puts the strength of the bow closer to the main boot and takes pressure off the top of the shin.

During and after your expedition

Simple steps to keep your feet comfortable:

- Stop at the first feeling of a 'hot spot' rubbing on your feet. Ask your team to stop and let you fix the problem so you don't struggle the rest of the way.
- Re-lace your boots, missing out a 'hot spot' area. Wrap the laces over each other three times before and after the missed area to keep the lacing secure (*see left*).
- If your foot is moving in your boot, try putting on another pair of socks.
- You can put a first aid elastic bandage over your heel to help stop it slipping in the boot.
- At lunch you can put on a different pair of inner socks, even swapping the left and right inner socks over can help, plus you can air your feet at the same time. If your feet feel fine, then just leave your boots on.
- If you get your boots wet, put scrunched up newspaper into them, right to the toes, and leave overnight. The newspaper will absorb the moisture.
- If you leave your boots in your tent porch overnight, put them in a plastic bag to protect them from dew.
- When you get home remember to fully clean your boots and let them dry naturally ready for your next expedition. You can restore water resistance using Nikwax products.
- Footwear must be suitable for the expedition environment and mode of travel. The final decision on what is suitable footwear rests with your Licensed Organisation or AAP Expedition Supervisor.

