

# A Beginner's Guide to Snowshoeing

by International Mountain Connection

If you would like to learn more about snowshoeing, the type of equipment that's used, and some tips and tricks to make sure that you have a safe and fun snowshoeing day, you're in the right place. Let's get started!

Hi, this is Michelle with International Mountain Connection, where we help non-native English speakers learn vocabulary and gain confidence when talking about their favorite mountain activities, using Instagram, YouTube and the blog on our website. Thank you for joining us!

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Today we're going to talk about three main topics: What is snowshoeing? The type of equipment that's used, and some tips and tricks to make sure that you have a safe and fun snowshoe outing.

What is snowshoeing?

Snowshoeing is hiking in the snow with special equipment called snowshoes! Snowshoeing is an excellent winter activity because if you try to go hiking with regular hiking shoes, your foot sinks down into the snow.

And often there are icy patches and that can be dangerous because you could slide, and you could fall. But with snowshoes you have a larger surface area which helps keep your foot on top of the snow. And thanks to the crampons on the bottom of the snowshoe, you don't slide!

What type of equipment is used?

When snowshoeing we use a special type of hiking pole that has a snow basket on the bottom. The larger surface area is important because it keeps your hiking pole from going too deep into the snow.

You don't need fancy or expensive hiking shoes to go snowshoeing, but it is best if your shoes are water-proof.

And of course we can't forget to talk about the most important piece of equipment, and that's the snowshoes!

The frame of the snowshoe is made of hard plastic. There are several sizes of snowshoes available and the size of your snowshoe will depend on your weight.

You can adjust the snowshoe to the size of your shoe. If it's too big or too small, you can make an adjustment here to make sure that your shoe fits well in your snowshoe and doesn't move.

Snowshoes have two straps; one over the toe area and one that goes around the ankle. Both straps are adjustable to make sure that your shoe fits securely inside your snowshoe.

Start by putting the toe of your shoe inside of the snowshoe. And tighten this strap. Next, you'll want to lower your heel and make sure that your shoe doesn't move.

Then we can put this strap inside the mechanism to tighten (the strap) around the ankle. All we have to do is pull this mechanism towards us to tighten. To release, you push on the black button.

I'm often asked if there is a right and a left snowshoe and the answer is, "Yes!" The mechanism you use to release your ankle strap should be on the outside of your foot. This way, if you accidentally touch your snowshoes together while you're walking, you won't loosen your snowshoes.

And as I said earlier, on the bottom of your snowshoe, there are metal spikes. They work like crampons to help you adhere to snow and ice.

Don't worry if you don't have all of the equipment. Normally when you rent your snowshoes, you can also rent hiking poles and hiking shoes.

Now for some tips and tricks for a safe and fun snowshoeing day!

Ok, so there are some mechanisms that are important to know on your snowshoes. Right now the snowshoe is in the normal walking position. So, if you're walking on flat terrain or if the slope isn't very steep, this is the position that it's going to be in.

As you can see the heel is free to move up and down, but if you start going downhill, you're going to move this smaller mechanism over to the other side. And what this does is it fixes your heel to your snowshoe and it makes it easier to go down the mountain.

If you start going up an area that's steep, you'll want to move this mechanism over to the other side. This raises your heel and puts less strain on your calf muscle.

Today we talked about some of the basics for snowshoeing: what snowshoeing is, the type of equipment that's used, and some tips and tricks to make sure that you have a safe and fun snowshoeing day.

For a detailed list of everything you need when you go snowshoeing, join us for our next video. A mountain rescue specialist has put together a backpack with all of the essentials to make sure you have everything you need when you go snowshoeing. The link is in the description box below.

Remember to click on the subscribe button and the bell to receive notifications of our new videos.

Before you go snowshoeing, talk to your local guide office to find out the local conditions of the trails and the weather. And if you've never gone snowshoeing before, go with a licensed guide for the first time. That way you can learn more about snowshoeing and how to go snowshoeing safely.

I hope you learned some new vocabulary and you feel more comfortable talking about snowshoeing. If you'd like to continue to make progress, follow us on Instagram or read our blog on our website.

But remember, Brian isn't in the kitchen. He's in the mountains. See you soon!