

# THESE BOOTS WERE(N'T) MADE FOR WALKING'!

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How to pick boots for your Labrador

My favorite boots are the ones that fit, and therefore stay on. Well, duh. But it isn't as easy as it sounds.

Boots are HARD. As you probably know. And assuming that you've owned at least some boots, some of what I'm going to say will be redundant.

One annoying thing is boots that are sold in pairs, when dogs have, as a rule, four feet. That said, like horses, their hind feet are at least narrower and sometimes smaller than their front feet, and a set of four boots will be the same size. The ideal would be to have multiple sets of boots and own several dogs (as we all do, LOL) so that a dog could wear two large in front and two medium behind, and even two from one brand in front and two of a different brand and size behind, but ain't no one got time to sort that out.

Another thing is that every brand sizes boots differently. S/M/L/XL in one brand can be a completely different size from another brand. Then there are the brands that size them 1-9. And S/M, M/L, etc. Even the manufacturers know that size is an impossible target.

Some boots have a clearly indicated L & R; some are only clearly L/R when you've wrestled the dog into them and realized that they're on the wrong feet.

The slipper style boots I would say are to be avoided at all costs. They tend to spin around on the dog's paw so that the sole (suede/leather/something with some traction) is on top.

I've found the best boots are ones with a defined sole and perhaps at least a somewhat structured upper. The problem is that of course such a boot has to fit pretty well. In general, it's really hard to fit boots because when the dogs wear them initially they all walk like horses in shipping boots, sometimes - hilariously - managing to walk on two or seemingly no legs. This is the feel not the fit, but going through multiple sessions to get them used to walking in boots so that you can evaluate the fit and whether the boot will stay on is - time-consuming. To say the least.

***The Avery open most of the way down, close up with Velcro secured by a single Velcro strap that wraps multiple times.***



***The Jolir look as though they'd be very well suited to hiking around creeks and lakes.***



***The Qumy are wider than most others, so would fit a dog with big/wide paws.***



***The Youly zip all the way down to the toe, which makes it easier to get the paw into the boot.***



The Arcadia are a PetSmart brand, and sometimes on clearance. They're nice, fit a lot of dogs (understand that I'm talking about Labs and LGXs from puppy to adult, and have little experience with other breeds), and are easy (enough) to put on. (1)

The Avery open most of the way down, close up with Velcro secured by a single Velcro strap that wraps multiple times.(2) Do you still remove dew claws? CCI doesn't and they're HELL to get into boots, so the ones that open "wide" help with that. I've had these for years and don't know if they're still available.

The Jolir look as though they'd be very well suited to hiking around creeks and lakes. (3) They would drain well, so the sodden boot that eventually slides off into the pond or just out of sight forever wouldn't be an issue. Despite having had ten sets in different sizes for about two years, I haven't got around to extensive testing yet. Maybe this year. They're split up the sides and have a single Velcro strap. The guys at Three Rivers used and liked them.

The Qumy are wider than most others, so would fit a dog with big/wide paws They have two Velcro straps which probably makes for a more secure fit but is also more trouble to put on (times 4).(4)

For this reason I rather like the Avery single strap/multiple wrap style.

The Youly zip all the way down to the toe, which makes it easier to get the paw into the boot, along with the dew claw if present. It's surprisingly difficult to stuff a paw all the way into a "closed" boot. (5) These are neoprene, so probably good in wet conditions.

Having said all that, I have to mention Muttluks, which are considered by many to be the gold standard of dog boots. I haven't ever owned them, but from what I've seen, I'm not convinced that they're that much better than others. And they're expensive and sold in pairs. If you go to [https://muttluks.com/?srsltid=AfmBOop2\\_7au6x4ScNM4Z7Ai\\_\\_5\\_4743kSm1PZIGPdLbG0Te4pIC7jdi](https://muttluks.com/?srsltid=AfmBOop2_7au6x4ScNM4Z7Ai__5_4743kSm1PZIGPdLbG0Te4pIC7jdi) and look at the first four (you can scroll across for more styles), the first and fourth are the slipper style I mentioned above (of which I have at least five sets) and they're awful. The best thing that can happen with them is that you get back to your car and realize you've lost one or more of them. The Mushers and Trackers look as good as many others. Maybe they're better.

In conclusion, as a middle schooler would say, I've written you a treatise that I might make into a blog post, considering how long I've spent writing it, and really don't have any concrete recommendations.

If you're thinking about buying boots I would suggest that you ask people who live close to you if you can try their boots on your dogs. If you try a few different designs it will give you a much better idea, in my opinion, of fit and ease of getting them on.

Woof!