

# What to Look for in Steel Toe Boots



STAFF DEPOT



It's not uncommon for a workplace to require steel toe boots for safety purposes. These boots have a steel cap integrated into the toe area of the shoe that is meant to protect you from heavy objects falling on them. If this isn't a purchase you have made before, it's easy to make mistakes and end up with uncomfortable shoes shift after shift.

Here are some tips to find the right fit:

## Decide on Steel Toe or Composite

Composite shoes meet all of the ANSI/ASTM safety requirements but are lighter to wear. Some employers, however, are more comfortable with the traditional steel toe. Before you buy, make sure that you have the option to purchase a composite shoe. If this is an possibility for you, you may find that the lighter shoe is more comfortable and less tiring at the end of your shift.

## Shop at the End of your Day

Over the course of the day, everyone's feet will swell. That's why it's important to shop for shoes at the end of your day to ensure a good fit. What is comfortable at 8 AM may be tight and uncomfortable at 8 PM.

# Wear the Right Socks

We've all been told that cotton and "natural" fibers are more breathable and better for our entire lives, but it turns out that is not the case at all. Look for socks that say they are moisture wicking. These are generally polyester, wool or synthetic blends. By wicking away moisture, these socks help avoid blisters and odor.

You may find that it's worth it to get socks that have some sort of padding on the bottom. That little bit of additional help could be the difference between aching feet at the end of the day and not.

Be sure to invest in good socks and most importantly, wear those same socks when you are shopping for your steel toe boots. This will help get you the best fit possible.

# Consider Insoles

Insoles have come a long way from the days of being slim pieces of cushion. They are now available to support feet that tend to turn in or provide extra comfort for people with conditions like plantar fasciitis.

Even if you don't have one of these issues, having some sort of arch support will provide you with more comfort at the end of a long day. Even the best and most expensive steel toe boots don't tend to have arch support built in.

Just as with your sock choice, make this decision before you shop for your boots and have them with you at the time of purchase. These insoles can be quite bulky and if you don't fit your shoes with them in, you may find that they are too tight on the top of your foot.

# Think About your Work Conditions

Will you be working in a hot or cold environment? If it's cold, you'll want a pair of steel toe boots with additional insulation to keep your feet warm throughout your shift.

Boots are also made in many different weights. If possible, buy your shoes well in advance and wear them around the house. What feels comfortable on your feet for the two minutes of trying them on may feel very heavy after two hours.

Lastly, if you can afford it, purchase two different pairs of steel toe boots and rotate them every day or two. This will ease having the same pressure points put on your feet day after day.

If you've been required to wear steel toe boots for your job, it's quite likely that you won't be allowed to start your new role without them. Take your time to purchase the right ones for your situation so you can be as comfortable as possible.