

Patagonia Mountaineering Equipment List

Welcome to NOLS! Choosing the right equipment is essential for any outdoor adventure. This list is designed to help you make informed decisions about the gear you'll need for your course. While your course will have specific equipment requirements, your clothing should be versatile and functional across the diverse environments you'll encounter.

Upon arrival, your instructors will review your gear and assist you in selecting what to take into the field. You'll then visit our Outfitting Department (La Mole) to rent or purchase any remaining items. We've carefully curated this equipment list to reflect your needs, but requirements may vary based on the season and instructor judgment. We recommend keeping tags on all clothing and leaving receipts at home, so you can return any unnecessary items later.

Packing Guidelines

1. **Use What You Already Own**, Familiar gear often works best. Bring more layers than you anticipate needing—your instructors will help you refine your choices. Any gear not taken on the expedition should fit in a moderately sized bag, which can be stored at our base at your own risk.
2. **Rent Key Items from NOLS**, Gear preferences vary by individual, and during the course, you'll develop your own system. We recommend renting rather than purchasing high-cost items, such as boots. While renting is optional, our gear is high-quality and specifically chosen to withstand the rigorous demands of NOLS courses. Rental prices are reasonable, allowing you to test equipment before making long-term investments.
3. **Visit a Local Outdoor Store**, many outdoor retailers, from REI to independent shops, are familiar with NOLS courses and can help you find suitable gear. Again, we encourage you to keep tags on all purchases and store receipts at home to facilitate returns if needed.
4. **NOLS Patagonia's Equipment Selection**, At NOLS Patagonia, we offer a well-tested selection of equipment tailored for our courses. Over the years, we've collaborated with

instructors and even contributed to the design of some gear to enhance the learning experience. We maintain a sufficient stock, so consider renting or purchasing your necessary expedition equipment on-site.

Equipment Fees

In addition to your course tuition, you will be required to pay an equipment deposit. This deposit will be applied to any rental or purchase costs incurred during your course. At the end of your course, you will either be billed for any amount exceeding your deposit or refunded any remaining balance through NOLS headquarters in Lander.

This equipment list provides an overview of the gear you'll need, rental and purchase options, and estimated costs. Please note that listed prices are for reference only, as availability and pricing may vary due to market conditions.

Quality Over Quantity

At NOLS, we believe that you don't need an extensive collection of expensive gear to live and travel comfortably in the backcountry. Investing in a few high-quality items and learning to care for them is a smarter long-term strategy. Focus on essentials and avoid being swayed by the latest trends or unnecessary gadgets.

Due to Patagonia's wet climate, we strongly discourage bringing clothing or sleeping bags made of cotton or down insulation, as they do not perform well in damp conditions.

How to Layer for a NOLS course:

We layer our clothing, combining different garments to achieve optimum insulation and protection from wind, rain, and snow. We use either synthetic or wool fibers, both of which insulate when wet; merino wool products are increasingly popular. We avoid cotton, which is poor insulation when wet. It is common to need three insulating layers, a wind layer, and a rain layer. Below you will find some examples of our layering system.



Questions?

If you have any questions, please contact your admissions officer or email us at patagonia_managers@nols.edu.

We look forward to seeing you in Patagonia!

How to Use This List

Required Items, the items listed under the **Required** heading are essential for your course. You must bring these items yourself or rent or purchase them from NOLS if available.

Optional Items, the items under the **Optional** heading are not mandatory. You may choose to bring them from home, buy them, or rent them from NOLS if they are available.

Price Indicators, if you see an **X** in the price column, it indicates that the item is not available for rent or purchase as specified.

Note: All prices are in **\$USD** and are subject to change.

Footwear			
It is important for your enjoyment and success that all footwear fits and performs well. Part of the mountain and “independent student group travel” sections will be spent in wet, muddy river valleys and possibly on snow and ice in below-freezing temperatures.			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Wool socks (4 pairs)	X	\$15 to 30	Heavy wool or synthetic socks.
Gaiters	X	\$110	Must be just below knee-high and need to be large enough to fit over plastic boots. These take a lot of abuse so they must be durable. NOLS Patagonia recommends and sells Outdoor Research Crocodile gaiters . Be sure to fit your gaiters for plastic mountaineering boots. If you arrive and

			your gaiters do not fit with plastic boots you will need to purchase an additional pair.
Camp shoes	X	\$55	For wear around camp and in town. These get a lot of wear but are rarely used for hiking. Open-toed shoes are not acceptable. A light running shoe or sneaker works great and is versatile. Students and instructors have suggested Crocs without holes or Holey's as a good camp shoe, since they are easier to dry and lighter. NOLS has Crocs without holes for sale.
Fleece booties	\$30	\$75	Fleece or synthetic-fill booties are worn inside your plastic boot shells while camping on snow. NOLS Patagonia has fleece booties for rent and Rab Hot Socks for purchase. Depending on the route your course takes, you may be required to carry camp shoes instead of booties. Keep this in mind when deciding to buy an expensive pair of insulated booties you may not need for your course.
Plastic mountaineering boots	\$95	X	A plastic double-boot (insulated inner bootie plus plastic outer shell) is best for its light weight, warmth, and drying time. If you're bringing your own, make sure that your model has a welt or groove to accept clip-on crampons. Koflach Viva Soft, Asolo AFS, and Scarpa Inverno are examples. These should fit comfortably with 2 pairs of wool socks or 1 pair each of wool or neoprene socks. Models with some sort of closed-cell foam inner boot (such as the Asolos) dry more quickly than those insulated with wool felt. Another option instead of plastic boots are mountaineering double boots such as La Sportiva Baruntse, Scarpa Phantom 6000, among others.

			If at all possible, we recommend you purchase your own plastic boots or mountaineering double boots and wear them around for a few days prior to your course. It's very important to have boots that fit well. Although we are limited to two different styles of plastic mountaineering boots, our staff do a great job fitting boots for students. Staff will generally retrofit their plastic boots with Intuition liner booties, which are warmer and dry faster. NOLS Patagonia has Koflach Viva Soft and Scarpa Inverno boots for rent in sizes 5.0 - 15. If your feet are larger than size 14 or smaller than 5.0 you will need to purchase your own boots.
Hiking insoles	X	X	These can be removed from a pair of running or hiking shoes or purchased separately. They are to be used with the plastic mountaineering boots. NOLS does not have insoles for rent or for sale. Students have recommended MySole or Superfeet insoles.

Lower Body Clothing

The use of clothing systems to stay comfortable in adverse conditions is a fundamental aspect of the NOLS curriculum. Your primary tool is judgment, not technology. New fabrics and materials simply increase the level of comfort and performance. Select layers for function and durability and remember that you will be wearing these clothes for a month straight, so choose something comfortable. Minimizing weight is a high priority on an extended expedition. Whenever possible, choose equipment that fills multiple needs and enables another item to be left behind. If you are purchasing equipment, scrutinize product information and select the lightest possible combinations offering reliable quality.

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Mid-weight long underwear bottoms (1-2 pairs)	X	\$60	These should be mid-weight synthetic or wool models. Cotton and cotton blends are not acceptable. NOLS Patagonia carries Patagonia Capilene 3 Bottoms. These will be in addition to 2-3 pairs of underwear.
Hiking pants	X	\$99	Breathable, soft-shell pants (not waterproof) should fit comfortably over lightweight long underwear. Reinforced knees and seat are strongly recommended. NOLS wind pants designed and made especially for NOLS are available at NOLS Patagonia for purchase only
Rain pants	X	\$100-200	A strong, roomy pant works best in mountain travel. A full-length zipper is convenient for changing layers without removing boots. We strongly recommend durable, un-insulated Gore-Tex rain gear. Marmot Precip or Minimalist pants are great options.
Optional Items			
Expedition-weight or fleece pants	\$20/ fleece pants	\$80	These should fit comfortably over a light layer of underwear. Bibs or shelled fleece are acceptable but quite heavy. A full-length zipper is convenient for changing layers without removing boots. Expedition-weight bottoms are also acceptable. NOLS rents fleece pants and sells Capilene 4 expedition weight bottoms.
Upper Body Clothing			
You will need 3-4 insulating garments that can be comfortably layered. These should be of a variety of weights and insulating values to mix and match as conditions vary. No cotton! Lengths, which will stay tucked in below the belt line, are preferable. Note that some items are considered a half-layer. Most instructors will recommend a layering system composed of: 1 long-sleeve lightweight base layer, 2-3 insulating layers, such			

as a fleece and a puffy jacket, to intermix, wear together, and combine with wind and rain layers to provide comfort in a variety of conditions. Choose a combination of 3 to 4 layers from the following options.

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Base layer top (1-2)	X	\$40-75	Synthetic or newer wool products best fit expedition needs. At least one of these layers should be lightweight (short sleeve is fine) for hiking in warm conditions. It is recommended that additional synthetic shirts (1 or 2) be mid- or expedition-weight. A zippered turtleneck is versatile, increases warmth and offers some protection against the sun. Short sleeve, silk-weight or very lightweight synthetic tops are considered a half layer. Patagonia Capilene Zip Top is a great example. Sun shirts are highly recommended.
Expedition-weight pullover	X	\$129-270	Heavier than a mid-weight synthetic or wool top, many people find it to be a useful layer. NOLS Patagonia has Patagonia R1 Hoodies, North Face Thermoball hoodies, and Patagonia Nano Puff Pullover.
Lightweight synthetic or fleece jacket	\$20/fleece top	X	Unbeatable warmth-to-weight ratio. A variety of weights and styles are on the market. Closeable cuffs, draw cords at waist and hem, and a high snug collar are features that increase warmth without adding significant weight.
Synthetic insulated jacket	X	\$114-320	An insulated jacket that is synthetic and lightweight with a hood such as the Mountain Hardware Compressor Jacket, the Patagonia Puffball or DAS Parka and the Montbell Thermawrap are all good choices This jacket should fit over your other layers and under your rain jacket.
Optional Items			

Fleece or lightweight insulated vest	X	\$185	Fleece or other synthetic vests are a great lightweight option to keep warm on cool days. Down is not acceptable. NOLS Patagonia sells the Patagonia Nano Puff Vest and rents a fleece vest.
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Upper Body Shell Layers

As with the lower body shell layers, you will need a breathable layer and a waterproof layer. This need may be met by one layer that is breathable, waterproof and fits comfortably over insulating layers.

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Wind shirt	\$25	X	Highly recommended, “the NOLS STYLE ” A breathable nylon wind shell is excellent for minimal weight, but bear in mind that this layer may take a lot of abuse. Patagonia’s Houdini jacket is an excellent option. This item is optional if your rain parka is breathable.
Rain jacket	X	\$110-220	A lightweight, durable, and roomy garment for mountain travel. Cagoules and anoraks are acceptable designs, but ponchos are not. This garment should be fully waterproof and have a hood. Gore-Tex is a trustworthy waterproof option. Your rain jacket should fit over all your layers. The Marmot Minimalist is a great option, OR Grandridge GORE-TEX Jacket .

Hand Layers

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Liner gloves	X	\$25-29	While not required, liner gloves are highly recommended and versatile.

Mittens/ gloves	X	\$20	Insulating, wool or synthetic. They can be combined with the liner gloves. NOLS has fleece gloves for sale.
Glove or mitten shells	\$25	X	Must fit over other hand layers. Coated nylon or Gore-Tex models are desirable. Many companies make glove or mitten shells with removable fleece liners. If you have one of these models, a very light wool or polypropylene glove should complete your needs in this area. Mitten shells (versus gloves) are a nice match with gloves and glove liners. They are easy to take on and off, and the gloves inside offer more dexterity than a mitten. They will also dry faster than a glove or mitten with built-in insulation.

Head Layers

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Wool/fleece hat	X	\$22-39	A ski hat is fine. Consider ear-flaps for added protection.
Balaclava/ neck warmer	X	X	Fleece, polypropylene or wool to provide protection and insulation in combination with your hat. Balaclavas offer great versatility. Silk scarves or Buff Gaiters are also nice for these conditions.
Sun hat	X	\$12-65	Consider a full brim for maximum protection. A typical baseball cap is acceptable, but a nylon model will dry more quickly. NOLS baseball caps and Sunday Afternoon full brim hats are available for purchase.
Glacier glasses	X	\$55-100	The drugstore counter varieties are likely unsuitable, so head for your local outdoor store. These should transmit no more than 8% visible light and be at least 99% UV protected. Julbo is a quality brand. Category

			4 lenses are ideal. Removable side shields make them more versatile. NOLS has Julbo Sherpa, Monterosa, and Tamang glacier glasses for sale. You may also consider a nose shield if you are highly sensitive. Please bring a durable case to protect your glasses as well as Chums or another retainer.
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Sleeping Gear

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
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Required Items

Sleeping bag	\$100	X	We require a 0°F/-18°C synthetic fill mummy bag (Polarguard, Thermic Micro, etc.). Down bags are not acceptable. NOLS Patagonia rents Sierra Design Centari 5°F sleeping bags. .
Sleeping pad	X	\$85-185	The best ones are inflatable pads for comfort and insulation, foam pad is acceptable too but you must complement with an inflatable. For sell we have style of Thermo rest
Sit pad	\$5	X	These increase insulation while on snow and serve as a portable seat for meetings. It can also be cut from a full-length foam pad.
Compression stuff sack	\$5	X	To pack your sleeping bag and clothing layers that you will not need to access during the day.

Optional Items

Sleeping pad stuff sack	X	X	A nylon sack to protect the environment from your sleeping pad and vice versa.
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Packs and Bags

Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
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Required Items

Backpack	\$150	X	Many packs on the market are not large enough either to handle the amount of gear
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			we carry or to withstand the use we give them. Your pack must have enough room to comfortably hold 70 to 80 pounds of equipment (5500-7000 cubic inches or 100-120 Liters) and should be an internal frame design. Reliable brands include Deuter, Osprey, Gregory, and Lowe Alpine. If you bring your own pack, your instructors must approve it before use on the course. NOLS has Osprey and Deuter for rent in Patagonia.
Medium nylon bag	\$10 each	X	A medium-sized, lightweight zip bag or stuff sack helps to organize and protect clothing in your backpack.
Heavy duty trash bags (2-3)	X	\$1.50	The large, strong trash compactor variety work best. These are used to waterproof your clothing and sleeping bag.
Optional Items			
Small nylon stuff sacks (1-3)	X	\$10-22	Used to organize gear in your pack. These should be between 2 and 5 liter capacity. Silicone nylon is preferred due to its light weight.
Mountaineering Gear			
NOLS Patagonia does not rents these items. If you bring your own, it must meet our specifications.			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Crampons	No charge	X	Used for glacier travel and ice climbing. NOLS uses Grivel and Petzl step-in crampons. It is very important that the crampon-binding matches the boots you wear during the mountain section.
Harness	No charge	X	We use Black Diamond Couloir harness. This should be lightweight and must fit over all your insulation and shell layers.

			Adjustable leg loops are strongly recommended.
Accessory cord	No charge	X	6 mm static cordage. This will be issued to you at the branch, as each course uses different lengths.
Miscellaneous Items			
Important: Small items such as sunscreen, lip balm, bandanas, watch, and trash bags could be cheaper and easier to buy at home than in Chile. Coyhaique is a small, remote town with limited availability of products and where all prices tend to increase due to the costs of shipping and taxes.			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Cotton bandanas (2-3)	X	\$5	Useful for all sorts of things.
Hand sanitizer	X	\$2.00	Each student will be given a 2 oz. nalgene bottle of soap for personal use, free of charge. Travel-sized bottles are optional for purchase for your course. Each cook group will have their own hand sanitizer to share in their stove bags.
Headlamp and extra batteries	X	\$40 to 120 (headlamp) \$1 (batteries)	Should be lightweight. Bring 2 sets of batteries or more if you use a bright halogen bulb. Lithium batteries work well in cold weather. If you will be using lithium batteries, 2 sets should be sufficient. NOLS Patagonia has Black Diamond and Petzl LED headlamps for sale.
Journal; 2-3 pens/pencils	X	\$19/ \$0.50	Notebooks will be required for class notes and are nice to have for personal writing. NOLS Patagonia sells waterproof NOLS Expedition Journals.
Sunscreen (2)	X	\$16	Two 3 oz tubes. Should have a sun protection factor (SPF) of at least 30 and should be water repellent. Those with zinc oxide offer greater protection and are highly recommended..

Lip balm	X	\$5	SPF 20 or greater. Those with zinc oxide offer greater protection.
Toiletry items	X	X	Toothbrush, toothpaste, contact lens solution, comb, tampons, etc. Bring enough supplies to last the trip. A Diva Cup works as well if you are familiar with it.
This is an area to minimize weight by bringing only what you need: no more, no less. Remember, you've got to carry it!			
Spoon	X	\$1.50	This must be durable—it helps if it fits inside of your bowl.
Bowl	X	\$10	We highly recommend that your bowl have a tight screw-on lid to carry lunch and leftovers on the trail. Tupperware and Rubbermaid containers generally work well. NOLS Patagonia sells 16 oz. Nalgene bowls with a screw top lid.
Water bottle (1-2)	X	\$20 to 25	2L capacity minimum. Wide mouths are convenient and they should be indestructible. Consider bringing an additional ½ L bottle instead of a mug. NOLS Patagonia sells 1L and ½ L Nalgene bottles.
Thermos	X	\$30-50	A good quality ½ L or 1L non-breakable thermos to keep water hot for quick drinks and emergencies. NOLS Patagonia sells Stanley 25 oz. thermos and GSI 0.5 L thermos.
Watch	X	\$70	Waterproof, with an alarm. Bring your own watch or buy during your travels before the start of the course.
Lighter (2)	X	\$2.50	For starting stoves and fires.
Extra glasses or contacts	X	X	If you wear prescription lenses, bring a spare set. Purchase all contact solution before you arrive. If your natural vision is significantly limited, bring prescription sunglasses or glacier glasses as well. We recommend keeping your glasses safe in your carry-on luggage during your travel to Patagonia.

Optional Items			
Small waterproof bags	X	X	For books, passport, papers etc. Nothing bigger than 8" X 12." Zip-lock bags or small stuff sacks lined with a plastic bag are good options.
Hydration system	X	\$42	Many folks recommend them in addition to a water bottle. Camelbak, Platypus and MSR all make excellent waterbag/drinking tube systems.
Insulated mug	X	X	Make sure that these are unbreakable! They must withstand boiling water, cold and abuse. Your mug should be at least 12 oz. The common system in NOLS Patagonia is to use a ½ L bottle in place of an insulated mug.
Trekking poles	X	\$95 to 140	They are not required but highly recommended. Collapsible poles are easier to pack and carry, especially when bushwhacking.
Camera	X	X	The experience you're about to have is unique and special; preserving memories of this expedition, which will transform you for a long time, is worth it. We truly recommend sharing this experience with family, friends, and other important people in your life. That's why we invite you to bring a waterproof camera—small, lightweight, and with batteries that can withstand the challenging conditions of Patagonia. Bringing a small "point and shoot." The 'action camera' —is a good idea for this expedition. Good option Pentax WG-1000
Knife	X	X	A small, lightweight, single blade is all you will need. A knife with a locking system is recommended to prevent the knife from opening accidentally.
Binoculars	X	X	A pair of small, light 7 x 20 or 8 x 20 binoculars will help you enjoy the wildlife.

			Again, you need a protective, waterproof container. Instructors often bring these as part of the group gear.
Book	X	X	One soft-covered book is fine. When you're done, you can trade with a tent mate. Instructors will select a small collection of curriculum-related books for the group to bring.
Coffee	X	\$10	NOLS does not have coffee available for sale. We recommend you bring your own, as supplies in Coyhaique are mostly instant coffee.
Neoprene socks	X	X	These can be worn inside the plastic boots and should be 2 or 3 mm thick. The thicker models with covered seams (e.g., Deep Sea) offer greatest durability. Avoid socks with zippers or prominent seams, as these will cause blisters and irritation. These socks are available at dive, kayak and windsurfing retail shops. These are socks, NOT hard-soled booties.
Ear plugs	X	X	These are great for traveling and for sharing tents with loud sleepers.
Pre- and Post-course Travel			
Equipment	Rent	Buy	Notes
Required Items			
Photos of family, friends	X	X	It's great to have photos of your community back home to share with people you meet. Chileans are very family-oriented and will always ask about your family and hometown.
Small towel, shampoo, soap, deodorant	X	X	There are shower facilities at the NOLS base. Please bring items for showering and a small towel. They will only be for pre and post-course use.
Optional Items			

English/ Spanish pocket dictionary and phrasebook	X	X	A small, travel edition can be helpful throughout the course unless you are fluent in Spanish. Plastic bindings are best.
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Shared Group Equipment—NOLS will supply

Expedition members share both the use of and the responsibility for the group gear that NOLS issues. NOLS charges only for group equipment that gets lost or damaged. Keep in mind that NOLS evaluates gear from a number of perspectives beyond what an individual user might consider. Performance, durability, and simplicity are all factors we consider when we select our gear.

Tents
Compass
Maps
Stoves, Fuel, Fuel Bottles
Reference books
Cooking Gear/Spice Kits
Repair kits
Water Purification
Climbing Ropes
Climbing Harness
Climbing Hardware and slings
Climbing Helmet
Snow protection
Snow shovels
Ice Axe

First Aid:

Our instructors carry adequate first aid kits. There is no need to bring your own.

Plastic Boot Fitting Guidelines

If you plan to purchase plastic boots before coming to Patagonia, or if you need to check the fit of boots you already own, please read the following considerations:

1. For prevention of foot problems, it is more important to have a good fit than a well broken-in boot. In fact, plastic boots will never be “broken in,” but your feet will.
2. Your plastic boots should fit comfortably with 1 pair of thick or 2 pairs of midweight wool socks. Err on the loose side so that you can wear two pairs of heavier socks in response to changes in conditions or activities. If you wear prescription arch supports or other orthopedic aids, or use an aftermarket footbed, make sure you have a good fit with the devices in the boot and that you fit your boots with them.
3. When trying on plastic boots, remove the inner boot and ask the salesperson to fit you with the Brannock Device. (What is the Brannock Device you ask...the metal foot gadget that tells you what size you are, and tells an experienced boot fitter much more than that). It will measure the width and length of your foot. If your foot is not held in place widthwise, it will slide lengthwise and be more subject to blistering. After you have a good fit widthwise, slip your bare foot into the inner boot and slide your foot forward until your toes touch the front of the boot. If you prefer (and some shops may request), you may wear a thin liner sock to perform this test. With the toes at the front of the boot, lean forward slightly and see if you can place your index finger between your heel and the back of the boot. If you can, the boot is probably the right size; if you can't, the boot is too small and you should try a larger size.
4. If the boot passes the above test, put on one pair of heavy wool socks and put the liner into the shell, lacing to comfortable snugness. Take a few steps. The toes should be comfortable—not too tight—with a bit of room to wiggle. The boot should feel comfortable in the arch, with a bit of support but not tight. As you take

a few steps, your heel should feel like it is being held in the boot with just enough lift to lose contact with the insole of the boot. If you have zero lift, it is too tight; a half-inch or more is too loose.

5. If your foot feels comfortable in the boot so far, try to determine how much room your toes have at the front of the boot: Kick a wall with the intent of getting your foot to slide forward in the boot with each hit. Kick the wall until your foot feels like it is caught by the instep of the boot at the same time your toes hit the front of it. This should happen on the third or fourth kick. Your toes should just make contact at the end of the boot. If they hit hard on the first or second kick, the boot is probably too small, or else tied too loose. Try lacing the boots a bit tighter or try

a narrower boot before trying a larger size. If your toes don't hit the end of the boot at all, try a smaller size. If your foot feels comfortable in the boot, if your heel lifts up from the bottom of the boot only slightly, and if your foot is caught and held by the instep at the same time that your toes hit the front of the boot, then you probably have a good fit.

6. Shop for boots in the afternoon; feet tend to swell during the day, and this can affect fit. Most people have one foot that is larger than the other. Always fit the larger foot. If the difference is significant, wear an extra sock or use an insole on the smaller foot.
7. Take your time when purchasing boots. Walk around the shop; kick a solid wall; use a ramp; try a different boot. One brand may fit better than another, even if they are the same size. The boots will feel awkward, but they should not be uncomfortable.