



What to Bring When Snowshoeing: Top Accessories for the Day Hiker

Please note that the accessories listed below (outside of the basics) are my personal preference, and each person is different in their needs. These accessories are meant for backcountry trails outside of the city.

THE BASICS

1. APPROPRIATE CLOTHING & FOOTWEAR

Appropriate clothing is essential on the list of what to bring snowshoeing. Like many others, I sweat when I hike. So, I dress in layers to keep cool when moving and stay warm when sitting. Layers and clothing items might include:

- ☐ Merino wool or polyester base layer top
- ☐ Polyester, fleece, or down mid-layer top for insulation
- ☐ A hardshell outer layer jacket that can withstand the elements
- ☐ Merino wool long leggings for cold days
- ☐ Hiking pants that are waterproof or water-resistant
- ☐ Non-cotton socks (Merino or Wool is best)
- ☐ Waterproof/Gortex hiking boots or shoes
- ☐ Warm wool cap or toque
- ☐ Waterproof gloves (with glove liners for cold days)

While alpine adventuring, Merino wool regulates your temperature to keep you comfortable

The coarser wool fibers are wider and stiffer causing irritation, whereas Merino's fine fibers are much softer

Besides what I wear, I always pack extra dry clothing, including a spare cap, socks, and gloves. I may pack an extra shirt and pants for a long day. I want to be sure I am dry not only for comfort reasons but in the event of an emergency that would leave me stranded in the woods for a while..

2. WATER

Staying hydrated is also extremely important, even in the wintertime. I carry a tiny cup (like a stainless cup/pot) in my pack, so I can heat water or purify melted snow or ice into water if needed, a pot, especially if I'm doing an overnight backpack hike. Besides what I wear, I always pack extra dry clothing, including a spare cap, socks, and gloves. I may pack an extra shirt and pants for a long day. I want to be sure I am dry not only for comfort reasons but in the event of an emergency that would leave me stranded in the woods or a while..

3. FOOD / SNACKS

And I'll take some food in my pack to keep me nourished. Snacks should be the ones least likely to freeze, but that can also provide some fuel on a strenuous hike. Some examples could include beef jerky, dried fruit, or trail mix. I may also carry hot chocolate or soup mix, or homemade bone broth for a warm refresher along the trail. (bone broth, get your healthy protein for energy and rebuild muscle and collagen for your hiking joints!)



SNOWSHOEING ACCESSORIES

1. TREKKING POLES WITH BASKETS

Did you know that using poles, reduces 30% of joint pressure! - Scientifically proven! Make sure to deploy the poles at opportune times.

Key situations include:

- Deep snow
- Long trips
- Carrying a heavy backpack
- Slick/slippery terrain
- Technical or challenging trails
- Moving up and down hills or mountains

Using poles in these situations will help you move faster, more efficiently, and in better balance while covering more terrain.

10 reasons to use hiking poles:

If you're not using poles while snowshoeing, here are some reasons to try them on your next adventure.

1. Better Balance

Uneven terrain, steep ascents/descents, unseen obstacles, and variable snow conditions can make staying on your feet while snowshoeing an adventure. Poles provide two additional points of contact with the ground, adding stability and making it easier to keep your body balanced while snowshoeing.

2. Get on your feet faster

If you do happen to take a topple while snowshoeing, poles make it much easier to get back on your feet.

3. Move Faster

Poles help snowshoers establish a consistent rhythm, propel themselves forward, and stay in better balance, equating to more efficient and faster travel.

4. Reduce Joint and Muscle Stress

While snowshoeing is already a low-impact activity, using poles further reduces the impact snowshoeing has on your legs, knees, ankles, and feet by distributing some of the load to your upper body. This benefit is particularly valuable considering the extra stress put on your lower body by the weight of heavy winter packs, snowshoes, and bulky winter boots.

5. Reduce Muscle Soreness

Less stress on muscles and joints can mean fewer sore muscles, especially following a big excursion. For example, a study of hikers found that those who used poles had significantly less muscle soreness, a reduced loss of strength, and a faster recovery than those who didn't use poles. Recovering faster can make a big difference in getting the most out of too-short storm cycles and winters.

6. Improve Circulation

Using poles while snowshoeing keeps your hands moving and blood flowing to them. This benefit not only helps keep swollen fingers at bay and keeps hands and fingers feeling warm but also helps you avoid cold-related injuries like frostbite.

7. Better Workout

Those who use snowshoeing to stay in shape over the winter will love to learn that because of the demands trekking poles put on the upper body, using them when snowshoeing burns more calories. While there's no snowshoe-specific study, a study of Nordic walkers - at its most basic, walking with poles—found that they burned more than 20% more calories than walkers without poles.

8. Increase Safety

Poles keep you safer while snowshoeing. They are useful for everything from testing ice thickness on a water crossing and searching for hidden obstacles to gauging snow depth. In the event of an accident, you can use poles as a pair of impromptu crutches or make a splint with them.

9. Bolster your Defenses (Bushwhacking)

Poles provide defense against all types of threats encountered while snowshoeing. For example, use poles to clear annoying trail obstructions like thorns and blowdowns or to fend off an aggressive off-leash dog or to clap together during a bear sighting.

10. Overnight Aid

Snowshoers heading out overnight will find that poles can be incorporated into various winter shelters, such as tarp/trench or Pyramid-style shelter systems. Those camping above treeline or in other areas exposed to the elements will find that poles are also effective anchors for securing tents.

2. GAITERS

Similar to poles, whether you choose to use gaiters or not is a matter of preference. They are especially helpful, though, when snowshoeing in deep snow. Since gaiters cover the gap between your shoes and pants, they can prevent snow and ice from accidentally getting into your shoes while on your outing. They also act as a windbreaker for your lower legs, keeping you a little warmer.

3. CRAMPONS

Bringing a pair of crampons or other traction devices is wise if snowshoeing in unpredictable terrain or on ice. The springtime is primarily known for trails with changing conditions. You may start your hike with minimal snow or ice but then progress to areas of deep and sinking snow. By bringing your snowshoes and or crampons, you're prepared for whatever the trail may throw at you.

4. SNOWSHOES

Enuf said. :) sometimes, you won't need them, if the snow is hard, I like to keep mine in the back of my car trunk in case, until I arrive at the trail head and ask and survey the area a bit. Sometimes when the conditions are icy, microspikes/crampons will suffice.