

Top-Treading Trends

> Boots get their legs with comfort, style and hi-tech features



1. Altama's Desert EXO, created for light-duty military/tactical missions, is made of tan desert suede and air mesh to blend in with the sand.

"This boot has evolved from the popular Original Desert EXOSpeed and EXOSpeed II styles that were introduced in 2006 and 2009," says Jami McCord, marketing and e-commerce manager. "Each aspect of this boot has been refined to create the most desirable tactical style."

Today's wearers expect lightweight comfort and athletic design, and the new EXO is as light as it looks – there's no metal construction. Approved for wear with the U.S. Army uniform, it has a suede-cushioned collar that keeps bloused pants in place. Its removable innersole, a multi-cushioned orthotic, provides extra comfort and fit.

Add to this EXO lug-patterned soles, dual-zone wicking and breathable air mesh, a slip-, acid- and oil-resistant and non-marking rubber outsole, molded ethylene vinyl acetate midsole and nylon speed laces, and it's a real trooper.

2. Baffin's Premium Worker Hi-Viz has turned up the temperature on a brand whose boots work in the coldest places on the planet.

Designed for cold-weather or cold-storage wear, the full-grain leather, waterproof boot's non-metallic hardware, safety toe and puncture-proof plate make it ideal for airport and public utility workers.

Features of the eight-inch industrial boot include a lightweight polyurethane midsole that wraps the foundation of the foot; Icepaw outsole pads for traction on ice; extra wide toe box for comfort; B-tek insulation that keeps feet warm in temperatures as low as minus-22 degrees Fahrenheit; Hi-Viz accents for increased visibility and safety; and Gelflex pads that shield high-impact areas like the heel spur and metatarsal. Available in black or brown, it meets Canadian Standards Association and ASTM standards for impact, puncture and electric shock resistance.

"Not everyone needs the same

protection as our consumers in Northern Alaska, Fort Mac Alberta or Eastern Russia, but no one wants cold feet," says Mark Ducharme, industrial sales manager. "This boot keeps feet warm without the bulk of a traditional winter boot.

3. Bates' Delta-9 Desert Tan, designed for work, uniform and military applications in multi-terrain environments, utilizes the brand's new iCS comfort technology.

With iCS, the wearer simply turns a disc to swiftly switch between four comfort zones – firm, outward, cushion and inward. The boot also has a slip-resistant Vibram Mutant rubber outsole whose lug design provides increased traction, a stain-resistant, Scotchguard-protected Warrior Leather upper, plus a full-cushion ethylene vinyl acetate footbed and gel forepart pad that provide added cushioning.

"The proprietary technology sets this boot apart," says Andrew Fowler, director of sales. "Our consumers desire lightweight, comfort and durability when it comes to on-duty and off-duty footwear. We created this boot with features that meet those demands."

4. Blundstone's BL560, a lifestyle and work boot, is the "warm and dry" version of the brand's classic pull-on.

It comes equipped with a thinsulate lining, waterproof leather and gore, oil- and acid-resistant thermoplastic polyurethane outsole and a natural shearling insole that's removable.

"Blundstone is known worldwide as the original pull-on work and lifestyle boot," says Tim Engel, vice president, sales. "More and more brands are coming out with laceless pull-on boots, and Blundstone is proud to be known as the original. As we like to say, 'Often copied, never duplicated.'"

5. Bogs' Industrial Chukka, in steel-toe and non-steel-toe versions and a slip-on style, is the ideal worker: It's designed to show up early, stay late and never call in sick.