



BackpackGearTest

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Wenger Xpedition Boots



*Wenger Xpedition Boots
(Image Courtesy of the Manufacturer)*

Reviewer Profile

Name: Ben Mansfield
Age: 33
Gender: Male
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Backpacking Background

I have been backpacking for well over 15 years. These days my normal trips are long weekends, though I do occasionally get out for a longer trip. My normal stomping grounds are western Pennsylvania and southern Ohio, and I have backpacked nearly all of the North Country Trail as it runs through Pennsylvania.

I consider myself a mid-weight hiker, but trending with the rest of the community towards a lighter load. My typical base pack weight (no food, no water) is around 20 lbs (9 kg) or less, and doesn't vary much with the seasons.

Initial Report

24 November 2010

Product Information

Manufacturer: Wenger
Model: Xpedition Boots
Manufacturer URL: www.wenger.ch
Year of Manufacture: 2010
MSRP: N/A
Manufacturer's Weight: N/A
Measured Weight: 2 lbs, 10.5 oz (1.2 kg) per pair
Size Tested: Men's US 11
Country of Origin: Made in Vietnam

Product Description

The Wenger Xpedition boots are mid-height boots for on-trail hiking. The upper is a mix of ripstop nylon and Nubuck leather with a waterproofing membrane Wenger calls "OutDry extreme waterproofing." The toe box is protected by a rubber rand that can be seen in the photos to the right.

The idea behind OutDry, according to Wenger, is that the boots not only keep my feet dry inside, but that they actually shed moisture on the outside as well. This means that not only do my feet stay dry but the boots also don't take on any additional water weight. This is accomplished by bonding the membrane directly to the inside of the upper, eliminating any gaps or space inside the boot where moisture could collect. Systems where the membrane is not bonded, according to Wenger, allow water to be trapped between the membrane and the upper.



The Wenger Xpedition Boots



The Xpedition's lacing pattern

The tongue and collar of the boots are padded, and the tongue has a strip of webbing through which the laces pass (at the third crossing) to help keep the tongue in place. The boots are laced in a manner traditional to most hiking boots that is very familiar to me.

There is a piece of webbing where the tongue joins the upper near my toes, four eyelets up each side of the boot, another webbing eyelet above those, and finally an open eyelet on each side to complete the lacing



A glimpse into the sole of the Xpedition

system.

A small loop of webbing is attached to the top of the back of each boot to help pull the boot on. Almost the entire back of each boot is also covered in what appears to be the same black rubber that's used to cover the toe box. I assume this is there to protect the leather when I kick the boots off with my other foot (vs. bending over and taking them off nicely).

Wenger calls the midsole "lightweight and cushioning" - it's otherwise unremarkable to me. The insole is unremarkable as well,

which is pretty normal among hiking boots these days. This particular insole is molded foam with some additional thin foam padding glued on the underside under my heel and under the balls of my feet. It's also easily removable to allow replacement with an aftermarket custom footbed or orthotics.

The outsole of the Xpedition boots looks about as rugged as what I would expect for an on-trail rated shoe. Wenger advertises these boots to use "HyperGrip" soles which allow each lug to move independently for better traction. In addition to added traction, HyperGrip is also advertised to offer extended durability, even when walking on pavement. I normally reserve my hiking boots for hiking purposes and don't wear them around town much, except for a few days when they're still relatively new and I'm trying to make sure they'll do their job (and not rub my feet raw) before I take them out on the trail.

A hang tag on the Xpedition boots indicates that Wenger offers a three year limited warranty against defects in workmanship and materials. Like many other limited warranties, Wenger excludes ordinary wear, abuse, negligence, and improper repairs or modifications, among other things. They also limit their liability from any damages resulting from the purchase or use of the Xpedition boots.

Initial Impressions

Out of the box, I was impressed with these boots - their quality seemed good with all the stitching neat and all edges finished. The padding was even and smooth, and the boots were generally attractive. Even my wife, who thinks all hiking boots are pretty ugly, mentioned that these were better looking than my current pair.

The first evening after the Xpeditions arrived, I put on some mid-weight hiking socks and tried the boots on, wearing them around the house for a few hours. I pulled the laces a little too tight which caused some discomfort across the top of my right foot after a few hours. My feet are normal width but are fairly high volume thanks to an ample arch, and I experience this discomfort commonly with boots and shoes alike. I also noticed some discomfort around the inside "balls" of my ankles from the boot cuff being pulled too tight.

I've worn the boots a few additional times since that first experience, and I've been experimenting with different lace tension with good success. A nice trick I learned many years ago is related to the last eyelet at the top of the boots. Rather than running the lace up through the bottom of the eyelet like on the rest of the boot, I run the lace from the top down. This serves to lock the laces below the top in place while also allowing me to adjust the tightness of the very top of the boot. This sounds complicated, but it's shown in the lacing picture above and is actually quite simple.

With this method of lacing, I can apply just enough pressure to the main part of my foot to keep my heel locked in the heel cup of the boot and prevent sliding, and I can also minimize the amount of tension I put against my ankles with the boot cuff to minimize any pain there. In a few days of around town wear I've basically eliminated the discomfort I experienced that first day. I have not yet worn the Xpedition boots with any weight on my back, so I can't yet speak to whether this will impact the fit and comfort in a backpacking situation.

I would like to thank Wenger and BackpackGearTest.org for the opportunity to test the Xpedition boots.

WENGER XPEDITION MID BOOT

TEST SERIES BY BRETT HAYDIN

INITIAL REPORT

[INITIAL REPORT - November 21, 2010](#)

TESTER INFORMATION

NAME: Brett Haydin
EMAIL: bhaydin AT hotmail DOT com
AGE: 37
LOCATION: Salida, CO, USA
GENDER: M
HEIGHT: 5' 11" (1.80 m)
WEIGHT: 200 lb (90.70 kg)
CHEST: 42 in (107 cm)
WAIST: 36 in (91 cm)
SLEEVE: 33 in (84 cm)

INITIAL REPORT

PRODUCT INFORMATION & SPECIFICATIONS

Manufacturer: Wenger
Year of Manufacture: 2010
**Manufacturer's
Website:** www.wenger.ch
MSRP: US \$100.00
Listed Weight: N/A
Measured Weight: 2 lb 7.7 oz (1.1 kg)
Left Boot: 1 lb 3.6 oz (0.6 kg)
Right Boot: 1 lb 4.1 oz (0.6 kg)
Color Tested: Charcoal (also available
in Olive)
Size Tested: 10.5 US
Warranty: 36 month limited warranty



Photo courtesy of Wenger

Other details provided by manufacturer:

- Upper - Nubuck, Rip Stop Nylon
- Waterproofing - OutDry extreme waterproofing
- Lacing - Scratched rubber
- Outsole/Midsole - HyperGrip articulating outsole with lightweight and cushioning midsole
- OutDry - A patented lamination process that sheds moisture, leaving the shoe dry and lightweight
- HyperGrip - Allows each sole lug to move independently, maintaining contact with the ground always

Product Description

The Wenger Xpedition Mid Boot is a mid-height hiking boot whose outer is constructed of a combination of nubuck leather and ripstop nylon. The Xpedition stands 6.5 in (16.5 cm) tall and just barely covers my ankle bone. The boots have a waterproof, breathable membrane laminated directly to the interior of the boot. This differs from other "bootie" membranes I have used where the membrane is simply a layer of fabric floating between others.



Closer view of lacing

There is a rubber rand on the toe portion of each boot that appears to be adequate. On the back side there is a rubber rand that extends the entire way up the boot. The nubuck leather criss-crosses the boot in an attractive pattern that covers most of the boot. The tongue is made mostly of nylon, however the tip of the tongue is constructed of leather and also has the Wenger logo; a white cross against a red square. Since Wenger is also the maker of the Swiss Army Knife, I believe I will refer to these as my "Swiss Army Boots!"

The lacing for these boots is quite straight forward. There is a cutout section in the leather that the laces are strung through on the bottom. There are four sets of metal "loops" that hold the laces in place. They aren't eyelets and they aren't d-rings, but rather something in between! Above the fourth pair of metal loops there is one set of webbing loops sewn into the boot for the laces as well. Finally, at the top of the boot is a standard hook on either

side for lacing. On the tongue, there is another piece of webbing sewn into a loop to string the laces through and keep the tongue in place. A picture of the lacing system is to the left.

Each boot has the Wenger name and logo printed on the outer side of the boots as well as a tab with "OutDry." On both sides of the boot there are raised portions in the leather that I presume provides additional padding against rocks or stumps.

The soles are called "HyperGrip" and the manufacturer states that this technology "allows each sole lug to move independently, maintaining contact with the ground always." As I look closely at the lugs, they do appear to move independently of each other thanks to the cut-outs in the outermost material. The lug pattern is fairly aggressive so I anticipate good traction. The image below shows the sole of one of the boots with the word "HYPERGrip" imprinted in the middle. I found that the soles are somewhat flexible which makes me wonder if there is even a shank in the boots. There is no mention of one that I could find.



HyperGrip Soles

The lining in the boots is quite comfortable. The material seems sturdy and there is padding at the top of the boots near my ankles. On the inside of the tongues are pieces of fabric that have the sizing printed on them. This also states the boots were made in Vietnam. The insoles are fairly typical of what I have seen in other boots. There is additional padding on the heels and where the balls of my feet would be.

INITIAL IMPRESSIONS

The Xpedition Mid Boots come in a Wenger shoe box. Opening the box, I found three hang tags on one boot secured with elastic cord. There was one for the OutDry feature, another for the HyperGrip feature and one for Wenger.



The Wenger Xpedition Mid Boots

I was quite impressed with the construction of the boots. I could find no flaws such as stray glue or loose threads. I feel as though this boot is put together well.

The lacing works great, although I will try to play around with it to see if different lacing techniques work with this boot. I found the boots to be true to size for the most part. I normally wear a 10.5 US shoe and these boots fit great out of the box. They don't seem to need any special break in time, but that is for time to tell.

I find there is a bit of room in the toe box which suits me just fine. I do have wider-than-normal feet and I have room to wear thick wool socks for the winter. Other than the toe box, the boots fit quite well.

READING THE INSTRUCTIONS

Overall I found the hang tags informative. There was not a lot of information regarding the boots in general, but I generally don't look at the hang tags for technical specifications. I do look at them for information on specific features such as the HyperGrip soles. I did find it amusing that the HyperGrip hang tag had a number of grammatical errors.

I found the Wenger website easy to navigate and attractive. I was somewhat disappointed that the product description did not have what I consider some of the basic information I would look for. For example, there is no weight listed for these boots. This is a big consideration for me as I try to keep my feet light. Another minor criticism is that these boots were not listed under the "backpacking" or "hiking" categories. As my pack weight has decreased, I consider mid-height boots for backpacking and certainly hiking. Instead, these boots are found under the categories "all" and "trail." If I was looking for boots, I would generally look under the "backpacking" or "hiking" categories personally.

TRYING IT OUT

I had the opportunity to take the Xpeditions out for a hunting trip in the San Isabel National Forest in Colorado. Almost all of my hiking was bushwhacking through subalpine forests of pine and aspen. I had to scramble up some steep sections in the snow and the boots had great traction. Even while standing on some wet, snow-covered rocks, the boots held firm.

The boots needed only a little break-in time from what I can tell. I had some hot spots on my heel, which I normally get from new boots. I had worn the boots only one night around the house prior to hiking.

SUMMARY

I admit, I am excited to test these boots out. They are lighter than what I wore all summer and the fit is great so far. The Xpeditions have great traction, which I should need for the winter months.

While I did develop hot spots on my heels, no blisters developed. This is probably a result of my foot shape. While I am somewhat disappointed that there there appears to be no shank I will see if this affects my use. As the saying goes, "so far, so good.."

This concludes my initial report. Please check back in approximately two months to see how the Wenger Xpedition Mid Boots are holding up. I would like to extend my gratitude to Wenger for their generosity and the the folks at BackpackGearTest.org for allowing me to be a part of this test series.

WENGER XPEDITION

TEST SERIES BY KARA STANLEY

INITIAL REPORT

November 23, 2010

TESTER INFORMATION

NAME: Kara Stanley
EMAIL: karguo (at) yahoo (dot) com
AGE: 27
LOCATION: Augusta, Me
GENDER: F
HEIGHT: 5' 10" (1.78 m)
WEIGHT: 175 lb (79.40 kg)

I backpacked for the first time in 2006 and am now hooked. I have hiked most of my life in the South on flat land or small hills. Since moving to Maine, my hikes have ranged from short coastal hikes to overnight backpacking trips in the mountains. I am working towards lighting the load and currently use a solo non-free standing tent, canister stove, and purification tables to cut down on weigh. Most of my hikes are solo and range from an overnight trip to 4-5 nights on the trail.

INITIAL REPORT

Product Information & Specifications

Manufacturer: Wenger
Year of Manufacture: 2010
Manufacturer's Website: <http://www.wenger.ch/>
MSRP: Not listed
Listed Weight: Not Listed
Measured Weight: 37.4 oz (1060 g)
Size reviewed: US 11 (UK 9, Eur 43)
Sizes available: 6-11, 1/2 sizes 6.5-9.5.
Color Reviewed: Charcoal
Other Color: Cool Grey

Description and Initial Impression

From the Manufacture's Website:

Upper - Nubuck, Rip Stop Nylon

Waterproofing - OutDry extreme waterproofing

Randing - Scratched rubber

Outsole/Midsole - Hypergrip articulating outsole with lightweight and cushioning midsole

OutDry - A patented lamination process that sheds moisture, leaving the shoe dry and lightweight

HyperGrip - Allows each sole lug to move independently, maintaining contact with the ground always



Side View



Hypergrip Articulating Outsole



Rubberized Toe & Heal

coverage period for defects in workmanship or materials.

The boots arrived with hang tags describing their OutDry waterproof lining for "Absolute Waterproofness." According to the hang tag, the OutDry is just below the upper to keep water out of the boot while allowing the sweat moisture to escape. The second hang tag describes the boots as having Nubuck Leather and Ripstop Nylon upper, overstuffed collar for comfort, and Hypergrip (R) articulating outsole. There is also warranty information, including the 36 month

The boots have four pairs of metal loops and one pair of hooks for lacing as well as a webbing loop on the tongue. There is a large web loop at the heel to assist pulling on the boots. The tongue is attached to the boot until the fourth metal lace-loop, about two inches (5 cm) below the top of the boot. The toe is covered with a rubberized panel that wraps around the toe and rises about an inch (2.5 cm) above the sole. The heel is also covered with the rubberized material to protect the boot from the extra wear the heel receives.

The color is a nice charcoal grey with dark navy Ripstop Nylon insets, which I think will hide wear, tear and dirt from winter hikes. The construction seems sturdy with no visible weaknesses.

Trying It Out

I tried on the boots and was happy to find they were wide enough for my feet, which are on the wide side of medium width. The laces are just long enough to tie a double knot, but not long enough to trip over. While walking around my house I found the boots to be somewhat stiffer than I am used to since I have not used waterproof leather and nylon boots before. I also tried the boots on with my thickest pair of wool skiing socks and still have plenty of room in the toe box.

I also took the boots on a hike the weekend after they arrived. The hike was 5.5 miles (8.9 km) with 1,700 ft (518 m) vertical rise. The weather was cool, about 30 F (-1 C) with light snow flurries during the start of the hike. The trail had a light covering of snow and some icy patches along with ankle-high drifts of snow at the top of the mountain. This trail was a steep climb, with some minor bouldering required in places. The boots performed well. My feet remained warm and dry despite being exposed to slushy mud, snow, and ice for several hours during the course of the hike. At the end of the hike I had no blisters even though I did not break them in before the hike. I did have some soreness on the tops of my feet after the hike, which I attribute to the lacing pattern and will try lacing them differently for future hikes. I also did not find the insole to provide much padding or support even with thick wool ski socks.

SUMMARY

So far, I am really enjoying these boots. They kept my feet warm and dry during my first Maine snow hike and I am looking forward to hiking with them over the next several months. I did have some soreness in my feet after the hike, but this may just be part of breaking in the boots.

Thanks to Wenger and BackpackGearTest.org for the chance to test the Xpedition

Boots! Check back in approximately 2 months (mid-January 2011) for my Field Report.