

What Size Snowshoe Do I Need?

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Snowshoes typically come in three sizes: 8" x 25", 9" x 30", and 10" x 36".

There is also a slightly smaller shoe built with women in mind: 8" x 21", and even smaller shoes intended for children: 6" x 15" and 7" x 18".

These measurements are often stated, in some form or another in the snowshoe name, and are the width of the snowshoes in inches by the length of the snowshoe in inches. This will help you visualize the snowshoe when it is not sitting in front of you.

There are general sizing charts associated with all snowshoe brands, but don't use these as a strict guide to your final sizing decision. IN GENERAL, an 8" x 25" snowshoe fits snowshoers weighing 120lbs – 180lbs. A 9" x 30" snowshoe fits snowshoers weighing 160lbs – 220lbs., and a 10" x 36" shoe fits snowshoers weighing over 200lbs.

Again, these are not hard and fast rules, so let's consider some different scenarios.

You say:

I weigh 170 pounds, but I typically use my snowshoes in the backcountry with a 20-pound pack.

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If your answer sounds something like this, you need to consider your **total weight with gear**. It is important to first determine how much you will typically weigh when you are ready to hit the trail. This includes excessive weight linked to footwear, hydration, a loaded pack, extra clothing, etc. If you will typically weigh an extra 20 pounds when you hit the trail, you will be more likely to sink if you are wearing a snowshoe that only holds your weight.

You say:

I weigh 170 pounds, but I never venture off packed trails.

If your answer sounds something like this, you need to consider your **snow conditions and terrain**. These are very important considerations, because of the link between snowshoe size and flotation. The purpose of a snowshoe is to keep you afloat and provide traction when you are walking on snow. If you typically stay on packed trails, you will be a lot less likely to sink with each step than you would if you were walking off the trail into deep snow.

Once you get off the trail, what type of snow are you stepping into? If you live in an area with thick, heavy, wet snow, you will be a lot less likely to sink deep into the snow, than if you are stepping into dry, light,