



FOOT SENSE

A monthly newsletter from your podiatrist



Dr. Rion Berg

December 2025

Winter Boot Guide: Finding Boots That Support Foot Health and Prevent Falls

As we move into Seattle's wet season, many of us are trading our athletic shoes for boots that can handle the rain and fallen leaves. But not all winter boots are created equal when it comes to foot health.

Choosing the right pair can make the difference between having a comfortable, easy going winter versus one with foot pain or a possible fall.



The Foundation: Arch Support and Cushioning

Many fashionable boots offer minimal arch support—sometimes just a thin board with a piece of leather on top. This can lead to plantar fasciitis and general foot fatigue, especially if you're on your feet throughout the day or have flat feet or overpronate.

Look for boots with footbeds that provide great arch support and are removable in case you need to add an insert or custom orthotics. Brands like Dansko, Alegria, and Aetrex build boots with removable, supportive insoles that can make a significant difference.

Waterproofing: Your Best Defense Against Seattle Rain

In our climate, keeping your feet dry is essential. Wet feet can lead to fungal toenails, athlete's foot, and blisters when temperatures drop.

A good quality leather boot that's polished and maintained will handle light rain. However, if you're spending more time outdoors, you need waterproof leather or treated materials. Gore-Tex membranes are ideal for waterproofing while still allowing your feet to breathe. Look for boots that specifically state "waterproof" rather than just "water-resistant."

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Intensive Foot
Moisturizer

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Ashley's daughter and grandcat Pookie



Jen and Whidbey, Dr. Berg's dog

Sheet Pan Gnocchi with Spicy Sausage, Butternut Squash & Hot Honey

- 4 cups cubed butternut squash
- 1 red onion, halved and sliced
- 1 (16 ounce) package shelf-stable gnocchi
- 2 tablespoons extra-virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 4 uncooked spicy Italian chicken or pork sausages
- 4 ounces feta or goat cheese, crumbled
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 tablespoon fresh thyme leaves
- Lemon zest, for brightness



1. Preheat the oven to 425 degrees F. Line a large baking sheet with parchment paper.
2. On the prepared baking sheet, add the butternut squash, red onion slices, and gnocchi. Drizzle with olive oil, fresh thyme, sage, garlic powder, salt, and some freshly ground black pepper. Toss everything together until it is well coated in oil and spices. Spread into a single layer on the baking sheet.
3. Remove sausage from its casing and place in 1-inch pieces on the baking sheet around the veggies
4. Bake for 25 minutes total, gently stirring the veggies and gnocchi halfway through.
5. Remove from the oven and crumble feta or goat cheese all over the top of the veggie and gnocchi, then bake for 5 more minutes to warm the cheese.
6. Once done baking, heat honey in microwave for 10 secs and immediately drizzle over ingredients and then garnish with fresh thyme leaves and add a little lemon zest on top. Enjoy warm!

Boots With Good Tread for Wet Leaves and Slippery Sidewalks

In the Pacific Northwest, our biggest slip hazards are wet leaves, pine needles, and moss-covered sidewalks. Falls on slippery surfaces are one of the leading causes of injuries during our rainy season.

Look for boots with aggressive tread patterns and deeper lugs that can grip wet surfaces. Some boots, like certain Dansko and Alegria models, are specifically designed to be slip-resistant. The tread should extend across the entire sole for maximum contact with the ground.



Heading to the Mountains: Snow Play Requires Extra Protection

If you're planning sledding trips, snow-shoeing, or other mountain activities, your everyday rain boots won't cut it. Snow boots



need insulation to keep feet warm in freezing temperatures, higher shafts to keep snow out, and aggressive traction for icy conditions.

Make sure there's enough room for thick wool or synthetic socks without compromising circulation, which is crucial for preventing frostbite.

If you have circulation issues or diabetes, talk to us before heading to snowy conditions, as cold weather poses additional risks. REI recommends the [North Face Chilkat V 400 Waterproof Boots for men](#) and the [Sorel Tivoli V Waterproof Boots for women](#) this year.

How to Get the Right Fit

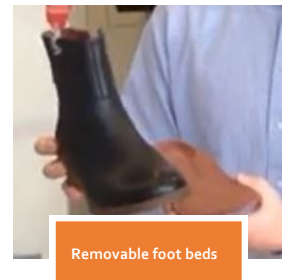
Keep in mind the following to get the right fit.

- You should be able to wiggle your toes freely, with about a thumb's width of space between your longest toe and the front of the boot.
- Your heel should stay in place when you walk—if it's lifting up and down, the boot is too big.
- When trying on boots, wear the socks you plan to use with them.

Choose socks made from merino wool or synthetic moisture-wicking materials that pull perspiration away from your feet. These fabrics keep your feet drier and warmer, even when you're active. Never wear cotton socks as they retain moisture.

When Support Isn't Enough

Even the best boots may not provide adequate support if you have specific foot conditions. If you experience heel pain or ball of foot pain from conditions like [Morton's neuroma](#), we can evaluate whether you need additional support. Custom orthotics can fit into boots with removable footbeds.



Don't ignore persistent foot pain or assume it's just part of winter. Cold weather can exacerbate existing conditions like arthritis, and improper footwear can lead to new problems. Pay attention to warning signs like numbness, tingling, or discoloration in your toes, especially after being in the cold.

Investing in quality winter boots is an investment in your foot health. Don't let wet weather keep you from staying active—the right boots will keep you comfortable, dry, and pain-free all season long.

Donate Lightly Used or New Outerwear to the North Seattle Family Resource Center

Here in Seattle and Lake City, many families are struggling to make ends meet—often having to choose between paying bills, putting food on the table, or keeping their children warm.

This season, our office is partnering with the **North Seattle Family Resource Center** to collect **new socks, hats, and gloves**, along with **new or gently used coats** for local families in need.



Donation Dates: Now – December 22

Where: Look for the donation container in our waiting room

Keep in mind even a small gift—a pair of gloves, a warm hat, or a cozy coat—can make a big difference to someone facing a cold Seattle winter.

Thank you for joining us in spreading warmth and kindness this season.

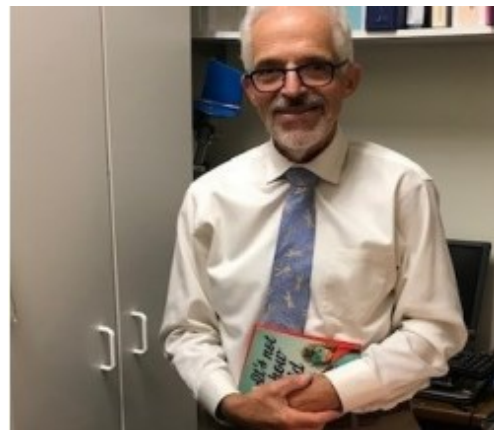


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—Dr. Rion Berg



To make an appointment, call us at 206-368-7000.