

(BOOTIES)

COPING WITH WEATHER EXTREMES

Some of us love the cooler months while others prefer warmer weather. Our pets, too, share mixed feelings when it comes to the weather. On a wet day, does your dog race outside and roll around on the wet grass? Or does she quickly bolt, do her business and then race back inside to dry out?

Changes in weather affects us all and particularly our pets. If it's cold for you then you can bet your pet is feeling the cold too. If it's blazing hot and you can't walk on the sidewalk barefoot, then your dog is going to be feeling the heat just as much.

Thankfully, there are some great products on the market which combat these weather extremes. From cooling vests for warm weather, to insulated jackets that keep in warmth and battle cold and wet conditions.

Dog boots or 'booties' have long been associated with rugged outdoor pursuits. They're very popular with dog owners who live in areas experiencing snow fall in winter. They're also popular with hikers who take their dogs through rugged terrain. Booties can protect dog paws from a wide range of elements.

Snow is an obvious reason for the use of these because dogs excrete some sweat from their paws, and walking on snow and ice may develop little ice balls in their paw pads.



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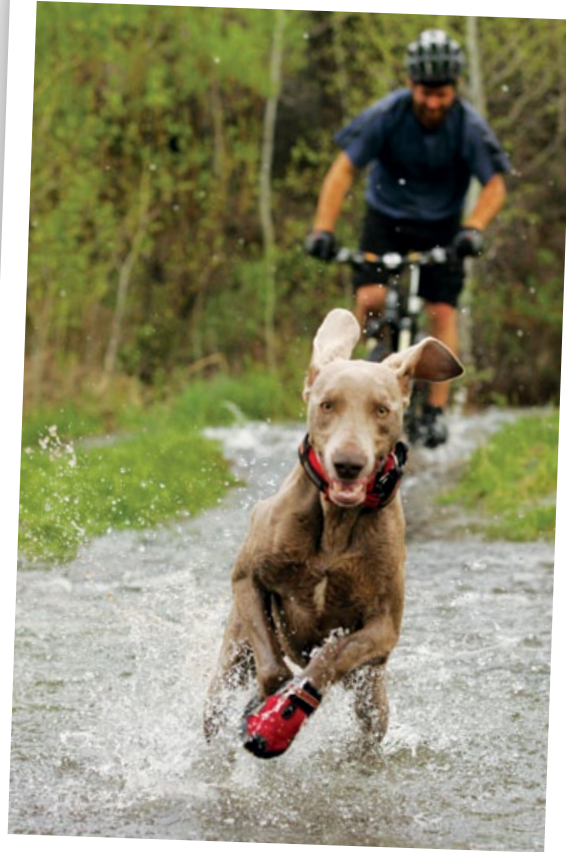
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BOOTIES CONTINUED



But booties can also protect sensitive paws from nasties in our environment. Some grasses can cause allergic reactions and this can often be attributed to the chemicals sprayed to keep insects and weeds at bay. Booties are often recommended by vets as a way to alleviate contact with allergens.

High quality booties with a good grip or anti-slip sole can help senior dogs navigate polished or tiled surfaces. Look for booties which have easy Velcro fasteners as they'll be easier to slip on and off.

Desensitising your dog to wearing booties can prove to be a difficult task and may take some effort. Start off showing your dog the booties and offering a treat. Do this consistently over the course of a few days at random times. Most dogs settle down for the evening after their meal. Take this time to use some gentle words and place one bootie on your dog's paw. Treat! Once your dog accepts the one bootie, try the second, then the third and then the fourth. Keep offering treats through this process.

Venture around the house with lots of praise and treats. Your dog may walk a little funny before being properly used to wearing them, however in no time she'll be walking normally. Once you're both comfortable with your bootie training, it's time to venture outside and enjoy the great outdoors.

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