**Breaking In Work Boots: Dos and Don’ts**

By Magnum Essential Equipment

Do you need to break in new work boots? Only if being comfortable in your work boots is important to you. When you break in new working boots, the boots literally conform to the shape of your feet. The majority of new boots will not perfectly fit your feet straight out of the box, but you can get the perfect fit by following a few best practices.

On a jobsite, everyone seems to swear by his or her own technique to break in new work boots. We’ve heard everything from wearing new boots in the shower to baking them in an oven. Are these break-in techniques crazy?

Put simply: yes.

Although leather is durable, it has its limits. Do you want your boots to fit snugly at work? Do you want to prevent the leather from warping before you even lace them up? Check out these dos and don’ts for breaking in new work boots:

**Do: Test the Fit**

Before you begin to break in a new pair of boots, make sure the boots really fit. Don’t settle on a pair that didn’t fit snug in the first place. We believe it’s always best to buy working boots with a forgiving warranty. Why risk it? That’s exactly why Magnum offers a 60-day comfort guarantee and one-year warranty.

**Don’t: Ignore Pinches and Hot Spots**

Every boot model runs differently in size, depending on design and manufacturer. Pay careful attention to pinches, hot spots and any other uncomfortable areas when wearing a new pair of boots.

In all likelihood, these pains won’t go away so easily. When you break in leather work boots, you’re stretching the boot around your foot. A sharp pain caused by the boot design is not likely to disappear, so always get a work boot with a great warranty.

**Do: Walk Around at Home**

Looking to break in work boots quickly? Breaking in a new work boot takes time and patience. If you rush the process with home techniques involving extreme water and heat, you risk permanently damaging them.

Instead, lace up your work boots at home. Walk, sit and do whatever else you might do normally at home with your new work boots on. Start with just 10 minutes a day and gradually increase the amount of time you spend wearing them. Wearing a pair of non-broken-in work boots for a full shift at work can be a very uncomfortable experience. Trust us: if you spend a little time breaking them in, you won’t regret it in the long run.

**Don’t: Submerge Boots in Water**

Anyone who has asked for advice about breaking boots in has heard some form of this trick. Some say to submerge a boot fully in water. Others will tell you to fill the boot only up to the eyelets. And then there are the people that tell you to saturate new work boots with water and walk around in soggy boots for a day.

Don’t like the sound of your feet sloshing around in waterlogged boots? Neither do your boots! Leather can handle only a certain amount of moisture. After that breaking point, the leather will warp and the original shape will be lost. It’s a gamble at best. You could end up breaking your work boots in quickly or making them unwearable.

**Do: Apply Leather Conditioner**

What’s the best way to take care of dry, cracking skin? Moisturizer. Since leather is animal skin, the exact same rule applies. If you’re looking to break in work boots quickly, consider picking up a leather conditioner. Conditioners come in creams, oils and liquids, and they will hydrate the leather surfaces of your boots.

When leather is moistened, it bends and moves more easily. That’s exactly how the “waterlog your leather boots to break them in quickly” myth originated. Instead of over-saturating the leather, a conditioner will gently moisten the material, allowing it to conform to the shape of your foot more easily.

**Don’t: Apply Direct Heat**

This is another common myth. Some people suggest baking new boots in an oven, and others say to blast the leather with a hairdryer. No matter how you cut it, applying direct heat to any leather surface is a bad idea.

Why? Heat equals dried-out skin. If you apply direct heat to leather, you risk drying the leather out. It’s even possible to crack the leather surface and completely ruin a new pair of boots.

**Do: Take Your Boots to Work**

Once you’ve spent some time in your boots at home, it’s time to take them to work. Make sure to pay close attention to how they feel at this point. If your boots don’t feel snug and secure after the initial break-in-at-home period, it might be time to take advantage of that warranty.

If you feel like your boots are beginning to conform to your feet, take them for a full shift at work. Through use, the leather will continue to mold to your feet and become more and more comfortable. Boots with good, padded insoles will increase the comfort factor too.

**Don’t: Kick Leather Boots Off When You Get Home**

When you get home after a long day of work, it can be really tempting to kick off your work boots at the heel. But this action, repeated every day, can damage the heel.

Or you can opt for a work boot with a rear kick-plate. The Halifax 6.0 offers a rear kick-plate much like a composite toe cap for your Achilles tendon.

**Key Points to Take Home**

Breaking in your work boots is very important if you want your boots to fit right and last multiple seasons. Remember, many common shortcuts for breaking in boots can lead to ruined leather. Review the points below.

— **DO** make sure any new boot you might buy has a warranty  
— **DO** start breaking in boots by wearing them at home  
— **DO** increase the time you spend wearing them before bringing your work boots to a job site  
— **DON’T** take shortcuts like soaking your boots in water or placing them in front of a heat source