

Snowshoes

The idea behind snowshoes is to increase the surface area of the person trying to walk on snow. By making the feet larger, the number of snowflakes holding the person up increases, making it possible for a person to walk on top of the snow rather than sinking in. There are many types of snowshoes and the construction of a pair can get rather complicated. Directions for building a simple, yet efficient, set of snowshoes follows.

Steps for Constructing a Pair of Snowshoes:

1. Select a long green sapling that is very flexible. Traditionally, [birch](#) is used for the frame, but commercial snowshoes are usually made from [ash](#) or [hickory](#). [Willow](#) branches can also be used. Bend the sapling over your knee and flex it gradually along its length until it is pliable.
2. Using a knife, carefully scrap away the inside of the curve to make the wood bend more easily.
3. Cut one side of both ends until they will rest flush against each other.
4. Fit the ends of the finished hoop neatly together and bind the ends with string. If no string is available, plants can be used to produce natural [cordage](#).
5. Bind two short sticks together at the centers with string. Repeat with two more pairs of sticks.
6. Lash the three pairs of sticks across the hoop. These will support the foot.
7. Weave string over and under the pairs of sticks and tie the ends on the frame of the snowshoe. Then weave string horizontally across the shoe, weaving in and out of the vertical strings and the sticks, lashing the materials together at each intersection. See [Figure](#) for additional help.
8. Tie the finished snowshoes to your walking boots with string.

Snowshoe Figure

