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How to Clean Your Dirty Hiking Boots

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Jul 7, 2011 Misty Faucheux Comments

Your hiking shoes protect your feet from the elements, brush, mud, etc. that you find on a trail. When they're doing their job, the boots themselves may look like they've gone through a tornado, but your feet look like you just took a stroll on carpet.



When you do get home, however, your hiking boots are often cake with mud and debris. So, you are now stuck in a situation where you have to clean your hiking shoes. What you don't want to do is simply throw them in the washing machine. The heat from the machine can compromise the glue or the rubber on the shoes, and it can also warp your hiking shoes. You would do better to simply wash the shoes by hand in a tub, bucket or even outside on a deck.

Let the Boots Dry

Before you start trying to remove caked on mud off of your boots, let the shoes completely dry out. It's harder to remove mud from your boots if they are still wet. Just set them outside in the sun or near a heater.

The one item on the shoe that you can wash in the washing machine is the laces. Simply remove them, and throw them in with your less than clean hiking clothes.

Removing the Mud

Once the boot is dry, you can now take on the not-so-fun task of physically removing the mud. Start off with beating the two shoes together to remove as much of the mud as you can. This is a simple, but effective way to get more than half of the dried mud off of your shoes.

Next, use either a soft brush or a clean towel or cloth to scrape off more of the mud. With this process, you should get the majority of the dirt chunks off of your hiking boots.



Cleaning with Soapy Water

While the above process did make your hiking boots look a lot better, you still, however, need to get off the stuff that is still stubbornly sticking to the boots. Regular non-abrasive liquid soap works perfectly for this process.

Simply fill up a sink, tub or bucket with water and 1 tablespoon of soap. Wet down a towel or brush with this soapy water, and scrub off the rest of the mud that is still stuck to the shoes. This is a labor-intensive and dirty process so wait to take a shower until after your boots are completely clean. If not, you'll just after to take another one after you're done.

Let Them Dry

When the shoes are completely clean, you need to let them air dry again. This process can take up to 24 to 48 hours. If you need them in a hurry, place them near a fan or heater, or even outside if it's sunny. Don't run them through the dryer as it can damage shoes just like washing machines.

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