

American Alpine Institute^{Ltd.}

Guide's Choice Field Testing Notes

AAI's Guide's Choice is an independent, international gear evaluation program started by the American Alpine Institute in 1989. Our professional climbing and ski guides are continually field-testing equipment and clothing in a variety of mountain environments and conditions throughout the world. Guides Choice awards are given to the top item of gear in each product category based on excellence in design, performance, and durability. Each year new Guides Choice awards are presented to manufacturers at the Outdoor Retailer Summer Market trade show in Salt Lake City, Utah.

All of AAI's equipment testing takes place in rugged mountain environments as part of their guided climbing and mountaineering trips. All tests are conducted by professional mountain guides

Tester for this review: Alasdair Turner

Item Tested: Kayland Hyper Traction Boots

Date(s) Tested: May/ June 2010

Trip(s)/Location(s)/Route(s) Used:

Washington Pass South Early Winters Spire (semi technical rock and ice climb)
Mt. Baker, Wa

Bolivia Mountains (Illimani, Cordillera Real)

Overall how did the Hyper Traction perform compared to similar boots?

This is simply the best boot I have used.

How was the Hyper Traction's ease of use compared to other similar boots?

Compare and contrast the different products and how one is better or worse than the other.

I bought a pair of Scarpa Chamonix and they were delivered the same day I picked up the Hyper Traction. I have worn the Scarpas once. The Hyper



Tractions are warmer, dryer and more comfortable. On top of all that they climb better.

How did the Hyper Traction durability compare to other similar boots?

The boots have not been tested for a long enough period to sufficiently test the durability. I would expect a leather boot to last a full season of guiding with not too much wear. In general I would hope a boot lasts for at least three seasons. I have had these for two months. That being said, I have had no quality issues so far with this boot.

How does the weight of the Hyper Traction compare to other similar boots?

They are lighter weight than the Scarpas, but this is not a huge issue for me.

How did the Hyper Traction comfort compare to other boots on the market?

They fit great. The single most important feature of any boot is the fit. Sportiva don't fit me. Scarpas do fit me so it is between scarpas and Kaylands. Right now the Hyper Traction are the clear winner due to the warmth and waterproofness.

I took a big risk by forgoing the plastic boots and using these on an early season five-day trip on Mt. Baker (a recipe for cold wet feet), and they performed amazingly. These are the first non-plastics that have kept my feet dry on an early season Mt. Baker trip.

How well did the Hyper Traction perform on different types of terrain such as hiking trails, walking with crampons on glaciers, climbing rock and ice etc.?

I actually jogged 3 miles down an asphalt road with these boots to retrieve a vehicle after a trip. They are no running shoe, but they are not that bad either. They do great on trails, and even better in the snow. I used these boots on ice up to 90 degrees and found them great.



When picking a climbing boot what are the key factors that you look for as a guide instructing clients?

There are only three things that matter for guiding. Fit, waterproofness, and warmth. We are rarely guiding at our technical limits, so comfort issues are key. I did get a chance to use these boots on more technical terrain (direct route Piqueneo Alpamayo, Bolivia), and they performed flawlessly.

What are some improvements that could be made to the Hyper Traction?

The Hyper Traction did soak through a little bit on day 4 of the Mt. Baker trip. The water soaked through the leather on either side of the boot and made for wet feet for one day. This issue is likely more my own problem since I did not snow seal the boots prior to using them. I am not really sure if there is a way or a reason to fix this.

For people with really skinny calves like me the built in gator is a little big. Not sure if there is a way to give this a snug fit on even the thinnest legs, but it would be nice.

Do you feel that the Hyper Traction is advancement in boot technology and would you consider the Hyper Traction a candidate for the Guides' Choice Award?

Without –a-doubt. These are the only boots I have used in the last five years that not only do the things I want as a guide (fit, warmth, waterproofness) they do everything I want as a climber. (Climb great on technical terrain).

Please indicate what other similar products you have used.

Scarpa Chamonix
Scarpa Cumbres
Reichley (sp?)



Photos

