

XTREME WORKWEAR

test



ROCK SOLID SUPPORT

The Professional Builder team ropes in rock climbing expert Alec Roberts to test the latest Buckler Buckshot work boots to 'Xtreme'

At first glance rock climbing and on site safety footwear might not be a match made in heaven but, if nothing else, what could be more fitting for a thorough test of the slip resistance of Buckler's Buckshot boots than precariously balancing our steel toe capped pinkies from an ominously miniscule ledge? This month, Professional Builder took its Xtreme workwear test to the skies, and into the world of ropes and rock faces, but, to our surprise, these high-performance work boots were actually more appropriate than we might have thought.

"Specialist rock climbing footwear actually has more in common with ballet shoes than it does with work boots," explains Alec Roberts, of Guided Mountain. "There's no grip of any sort and they're built to be lightweight and very tight fitting. But if you're climbing a mountain you won't be taking an extra pair of shoes with you, so at some point you'll almost certainly scale a rock face in footwear that is far more cumbersome than anything a builder would have on site, so they're not as unsuitable as at first you might imagine."

Style

Just because you need the right protection doesn't mean you can't put your best foot forward in the fashion stakes in the process and the Dark Brown Crazy Horse Leather and Black Oil Full Grain Leather examples that our team was sporting certainly looked the part amidst the stunning scenery. Predictably, our expert tutor also proved to be rather more graceful and fleet of foot in the ascent than his students for the day.



Injection Moulded Sole

If you're thinking that you wouldn't want to be in our shoes than fear not – Buckler's boots are engineered to withstand whatever mindless violence a building site can throw at them so we were confident that



we'd be sure of foot, even if our head for heights was sorely tested. In fact, on a rock escarpment that is classified as severe, perched on the vertiginous slope of the stunning Symonds Yat gorge in Gloucestershire, that injection moulded rubber outsole provided all the necessary purchase to haul ourselves to the summit. That outsole is also heat (300°C) and oil resistant.



Steel Protection

Even with the addition of a steel toe cap and steel midsole these boots are both lightweight and flexible. Rock climbing requires you to do most of the work with your legs, rather than your arms and hands, because you have far bigger muscles in the lower part of your body in order to push yourself upwards.

Manoeuvring our feet into a position where we could make progress was a straightforward proposition and if the ankle support is up to the challenge of supporting our creaking bones when climbing then it will more than do the job if, for instance, you happen to be at a more mundane height when scaling battens. In fact, we can confidently say that they presented no impediment whatsoever – with the biggest obstacle, we must confess, being our lack of fitness.

Guided Mountain

Alec Roberts of Guided Mountain is a rock climbing and mountaineering instructor based in the Forest of Dean, where he has easy access to the limestone cliffs of the Wye Valley. He has worked as an instructor for over 15 years and holds a Mountain Instructor Certificate, which is the highest qualification for instructing summer and winter climbing, and all related mountaineering activities in the UK. He is also a member of the British Mountaineering Council the Mountain Leader Training Association and the Association of Mountaineering Instructors.

If you want to book a rock climbing course with Alec then visit www.guidedmountain.co.uk for more details or call 07928819481 or 01594541622.

MORE INFORMATION

For further information on the Buckler range of boots use the reader enquiry number 000

Readerlink enquiry 000 ▶

