

Ask Jon Eakes

# Speciality soles and shoes -- protecting against slipping and crushing

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We can't walk on water, but we do try to walk on ice

When I first wrote this article in 2009, speciality work stores were about the only place you could buy of any these shoe spikes outside of the Internet. In 2020 if you live where there is ice on the ground, you can find them in renovation centres, drug stores and sports stores just to name a few. Although there are many new variations, this article still covers the basic differences available, and these are still available on the web.

When you live in Ice Country, as most Canadians do, slipping on ice is a daily hazard for a good part of the year. Hence, inventors have developed a whole range of specialty strap-on soles to keep us from slipping. Be careful with all ice gripping shoes as they become slippery on smooth concrete or stone floors and of course they will scratch wooden and vinyl flooring. You can usually find these kind of boot add-ons at shoe repair shops and now even in drug stores wherever ice is a common hazard for walking. But the best of them are found on the web. Stabilicers Walk is my most used set of grippers -- but check out the wide variety in the paragraphs below.

Icers: HEEL - A lighter version of the most heavy duty and sure footed of all the shoe/boot attachments. Originally a heavy car-tire like sole with sharpened cleats screwed into the sole Icer has made a lighter version of this absolute grip. They attach to the boot with Velcro straps. These are the ideal grips for heavy work and sport on ice as they give you an absolute grip and they are no longer so heavy. Replacement cleats can be purchased to keep them walking.

On the opposite end of the spectrum you will find [www.YakTrack.com](http://www.YakTrack.com). This is like a metal wire wound around rubber cords. It is the easiest to install and the lightest to carry in your pocket. This is the one I started with but now I prefer the STABLEicers Walk below.

The company STABILicers has developed the widest range of ice gripper shoe add-ons and has become my favorite source for variety, colours and quality -- they make specialized versions for work, hiking, walking, running and more.

STABILicers Maxx: [www.stabil.implus.com](http://www.stabil.implus.com) Remarkably similar to the Icer (a copy? or the same company - two brands?). The velcro straps are just a bit short on these to go around very large snow boots.

STABILicers Walk -- my everyday choice, see photo above: [www.stabil.implus.com](http://www.stabil.implus.com) are lighter duty -- better traction than YakTrax, less traction than Icers -- but has rubber side and depth cleats that reducing slipping on concrete and surfaces too hard for the steel teeth to bite into. That means you can walk into the shopping centre without slipping, sit down and take them off. Same for going back onto the ice.

2024 - Stabil is no longer selling directly to Canada, although I did find them on ULine. But I lost one and before I found it on ULine I purchased a similar product on Amazon from SYourSelf -- which is even better, less expensive and has a strap to prevent losing one in the snow. SYourSelf is my new favorite in this ever changing world.

## Other Speciality Shoes

From the TV show clip where this database entry started: Jordan David is a maker of specialty shoes and they make the rubber boot you see in the second photo. The grooves in the sole are filled with aluminum oxide abrasive. These are good work boots for people working in slushy end of winter conditions.

Here is a unique thing called a Boot Saver. It uses a very special and extremely good glue to glue this protector right to old leather boots. That helps to keep the toes from wearing out. This is particularly useful for people with steel toed work boots because once the steel in the toe is exposed, they are no longer allowed on construction sites because of the danger of electrical contact. The Boot Savers can make that old pair of work boots last until their soles fall off. If you can't find them in the stores, you can find them on Amazon.

Speaking of work boots, it may surprise you to know that you can get that steel toe protection in all kinds of boots. Terra Boots cut the one open for us in the photo above, but they also make hiking boots with steel toes (to protect from falling rocks), dress shoes with steel toes (for the boss on the construction site) and the ladies have not been left out as they make designer quality boots, with steel toes as well. If you need steel toes, you don't have to wear construction boots.

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