



Gaiters. They're never going to win any fashion contests (well, you never know), but they are a useful piece of kit for the keen bushwalker. As Bob West and Peter Inverarity explain in their reviews, they are extremely useful for keeping you clean, free from pebbles in your boots, and provide a line of defense against snake bites.

Now, over to what Bob and Peter have to say about their **Sea to Summit Quagmire gaiters**:

Gaiters in the Heat - Bob West

Sea to Summit gear comprises much of my bushwalking and canoeing gear collection. They make quality products that really serve their designed purpose and as an added bonus are an Australian company.

I wear shorts all the time when bushwalking and this fact alone influenced my habit for wearing gaiters. For me they:

- protect the lower legs from the rough terrain, be it rocks, spinifex, bushes or mud
- prevent small stones and bits of bush getting in my shoes or boots
- keep my feet dry if worn with leather boots, unless you are doing long deep water crossings
- keep my legs warm and insulated in cold, windy conditions
- provide a protective barrier against snake bite



The rocky, prickly, snakey Ikara-Flinders Ranges. Definitely a place to wear gaiters.



My first pair

There are many types and many brands of gaiters, with different weights and sizes for a variety of conditions. My first pairs were all canvas with zips. They were a good, durable product although a bit on the stiff and heavy side, with the zip being a fiddle to use, and laces that went under your boot that quickly wore out.

Later I went for a pair of Sea to Summit Overlanders. They were light and easy-to-use, but I found I quickly felt sweaty and uncomfortable in them unless I opened up the front opening. This of course then negated some of the reasons I wore them.

Upgrading my gaiters

I then opted for the more expensive **Quagmire model in Goretex (now eVent)**. This resolved my issues straight away as they breathed easily. No more wet clammy legs. They are easy to put on and easy to adjust to the type of footwear being worn. I have had these for a long time now and they have well and truly been used and abused, with little if any sign of wear.

The straps are the obvious wear points but the hard-wearing material just keeps on going. If I do wear the straps out there are replacement ones available that can be easily fitted.

The new bushwalking season in Australia is fast approaching. Time to add another season to my Quagmires!



They've been snazzed up a bit in recent years. These are Sea to Summit Quagmires circa a few-years-ago. Holding up well, don't you think?



Gaiters in the Mud - Peter Inverarity

Sea to Summit continues to impress with a product I decided to put to the test in Tasmania's harsh **Southwest National Park**.

Firstly, these things are comfortable. While they are 'full length' (i.e. extending to just below the knee) I never felt they were impeding my gait, or even contributing any extra weight. Properly fitted, they felt very natural over my lower legs.

Testing them in Tassie

Tassie is well known for its mud, and these gaiters received their fair share. I liked how their outer surfaces presented very few wrinkles or horizontal surfaces, so mud really had no place to stick to, and quickly fell off. They performed well in water as well - presenting a barrier for momentarily repelling water. No gaiters are water-tight, so extended periods with feet in water did eventually allow water into the boots.

Ease of use

Putting them on and pulling them off was quite easy. Sturdy under-heel strap which the wearer steps into, then a nice, thick 5cm velcro seam at the front (easy to access) running the full height of the gaiters: simple and easy. There's a hook to grab your boot's shoelaces, and a stud to secure the flap over your boot. The stud can get muddy and difficult to secure after the first day: gladly I found it to be easy to wash with water.

Minor improvements to the design

This is perhaps one of the few improvements I could suggest to Sea to Summit with future designs. Finally, a tightening buckle/strap assembly below the knee offers the wearer the ability to pull the top band tight if required. I didn't end up needing to pull this much, as the fit was pretty flush on my legs anyway.



*This is why you wear gaiters in Tasmania. Southwest National Park... The Overland Track.
Mud is the rule, not the exception.*

What I liked about them

I like a gaiter which doesn't require any fiddling or adjustment during the day. These were exactly that: I put them on in the morning, and didn't touch them again until the end of the day when I peeled them off. I suppose this can be ascribed to the simple and robust design. Finally, washability and common sense colour. I found the material to have good washable properties both on the track, and once I got home. They dried out within an hour or two in the afternoon sun whilst on the track, and it's sensible black colour made any mud stains look insignificant.

A handy tip when buying gaiters

Wear the socks, boots and pants you intend to hike in into the store and try your gaiters on before making your purchase. Selecting the right size should be done with care, so as to avoid surprises on day one.

I found that the size I required was completely different to the size I would've guessed, due to the form factor of my boots and pants.

To buy a pair, go [here](#).

Do you wear gaiters when bushwalking?