Finding a comfortable pair of boots is nothing less than essential when it comes to protecting your feet in colder seasons. Proper footwear — insulated, waterproof boots or shoes — is just as important as coats, hats or gloves during cold weather.

With so many stylish boots to consider, many consumers wonder what to look for. Here are a few tips from the American Podiatric Medical Association:

• Avoid boots made from synthetic materials as they trap in heat and moisture, causing odor. Select natural materials such as leather to keep feet dry.

• High-heeled boots may be stylish but they do transfer weight onto the ball of the foot, which can cause pain and numbness. Choose a boot with a stacked or lower heel, no more than two inches high.

• While rain boots are a fun, carefree way to navigate puddles, their rigid shape limits movement and they provide no arch support, so they should not be worn for long periods of time. If you do want to wear them, insert arch supports.

• Classic cowboy boots are very trendy, but this shoe construction often comes with a narrow toe box, which can cramp and blister your toes. Boots should be comfortable and have plenty of toe room when you try them on in the store. There should not be a break-in period as this often results in foot problems.

• Furry snow boots are cozy, but don’t trade traction for style. Select a pair with rubber soles and deep grooves for proper gripping.

• While popular, ankle boots often lack ankle support, which can swiftly lead to foot problems. Avoid walking long distances on them.

• When shopping for boots, remember to try them on in the afternoon as your feet can swell during the day. Also, most people’s feet are not the same size. Select the pair that fits your larger foot.

• Keep feet happy by massaging your feet and applying lotion to help keep skin moisturized.

If you have foot pain or other problems affecting your feet, consult a podiatrist.

Get more shoe- or boot-buying advice plus foot care tips by visiting www.apma.org.