



Most climbing shoes share one major similarity, stopping short of covering your ankles. While this is fine for bouldering and sport climbing, traditional climbing often has unique features that call for extra coverage to safeguard your ankles. For this reason, it's worth considering a high-top climbing shoe for the following benefits:



Photo by Benjamin L Eaton

Protection

Crack climbing can be brutal to your ankles when you're repeatedly stuffing your feet inside a chasm lined with sandpaper. By covering your ankles, you can jam, cam, wedge, torque, and stack your feet inside the cracks without getting all chewed up. It's surprising how much quicker you can master the various ways of doing heel-toe cams and t-stacks when you aren't worrying about your ankles getting grated like a block of cheese.



Photo by Benjamin L Eaton

Warmth

Colder temperatures usually accompany high-elevation trad routes and if your extremities get cold, your performance could be hindered. Your blood is what carries warmth to your extremities and you can lose a lot of that warmth when the blood passes through any major arteries that are exposed to the cold. With the anterior tibial artery running through the ankle, a high-top climbing shoe can add some extra insulation to the blood that runs to your toes.



Photo by Tyler Richards

Stability

Climbing long multi-pitch routes can be very tiring, especially on your feet. The extra bit of coverage over your ankles can provide supplementary stability to your footwork that is easily appreciated when your joints are getting tired from a long day on the rock.



Photo by Ken Klingler

Proprioceptive Feedback

The contact that the high-top has with the skin around your ankle can provide an extra bit of proprioceptive feedback that allows you to be more aware of the position and angle of your foot without having to look at it. This can help you better sense if your ankle is doing something you don't want it to, like over or under torquing in the crack or not sustaining the perfect angle on a small edge.



Photo by Benjamin Eaton

Cypher Sentinel

We built the Cypher Sentinel with a leather upper and synthetic liner that covers the foot all the way up over the ankle to provide such benefits. It is lightly padded just where you need it to provide protection and comfort without compromising your sensitivity and connection with the rock. The shoe is built on a flat last with a stiff Vibram XS Grip sole, keeping your foot in a comfortable shape for jamming in cracks while also providing the stiffness needed to edge on the smallest footholds. The Cypher Sentinel is our go-to trad-climbing shoe—a jack-of-all-trades—that can handle all types of rock from granite to sandstone and everything in-between.



Give your ankles a break and check out the Sentinel for your next big day out.

Sentinel