



THE TEST: These socks were put to the test on a variety of walks, from Lake District mountains to lowland paths. They were worn with leather boots and multi-activity shoes, and judged on their comfort, fit, warmth, how well they wicked sweat away from feet, odour retention and quality. The socks were also machine-washed.

SEALSKINZ MID THERMAL MERINO £25 ★★★★★

CONTACT: 01553 622030, www.sealskinz.com

COMFORT & FIT 8/10

These have a waterproof/breathable membrane sandwiched between a nylon Lycra outer and Merino wool inner. For a fairly bulky sock they were surprisingly comfortable, fitting well with no bunching. The padded wool lining was very cosy.

PERFORMANCE 8/10

Ideal if your boot springs a leak! For a waterproof sock, temperature control and breathability were good, keeping feet warm and sweat-free. Odour control was also good. The outer fabric does hold moisture and they were the slowest to dry after washing.

Verdict

A high-performance (hence the price) unisex sock that feels strange at first, but is well worth trying.



BRIDGEDALE TREKKER £11 ★★★★★

CONTACT: 0116 234 4644, www.bridgedale.com

COMFORT & FIT 7/10

Available in green, grey and black, this is a well-padded, cosy sock that offers a reasonably good fit. The internal seams could be a little smoother, but thumbs up for the deep, comfortable ankle cuffs.

PERFORMANCE 8/10

Recommended for use with Gore-Tex footwear, these coped with perspiration well to keep feet dry, warm and smell-free. Drying time was average after washing and the new wool fluffed up a little.

Verdict

The Trekker is a well-priced, reliable men's sock, which should serve you well this winter. A women's version is also available.



THORLO TKX TREKKING SOCK £14 ★★★★★

CONTACT: 01539 740840, www.thorlo.com

COMFORT & FIT 6/10

Designed for trekking on rugged terrain, the heavyweight padding and elasticated support took time to get used to. The synthetic/wool fabric also felt rougher compared to the others, but this improved with wear and washing.

PERFORMANCE 9/10

They were very warm but did not cause feet to overheat. They also kept skin dry – helped by ventilation panels to enhance wicking – and there was no smell. Despite being a thick pair of socks, they dried the quickest after washing.

Verdict

A good technical sock that's built to last, although it won't suit everyone. There's a women's option, too.



X-SOCKS HILL WALKING SHORT £11 ★★★★★

CONTACT: 01250 873863, www.ardblairsports.com

COMFORT & FIT 6/10

Designed specifically for left and right feet, these socks have several support zones, which hug the contours of the foot. This felt strange and took time to get used to. Some walkers may also want more cushioning underfoot.

PERFORMANCE 7/10

This hi-tech unisex option has many features, including air-conditioning channels to help keep feet dry, which worked well. The footbed fabric seemed durable and resisted smells, but felt a little harsh. They washed and dried okay.

Verdict

A feature-packed sock that will have its fans, but won't appeal to everyone. A good price for such a technical sock.



SMARTWOOL HIKING MEDIUM CREW £13 ★★★★★

CONTACT: 0131 221 2200, www.anatom.co.uk

COMFORT & FIT 8/10

Made from 70 per cent wool with nylon and stretchy Spandex, this sock was a good comfortable fit. We liked the smooth toe seams, but some walkers may prefer a little more padding underfoot and a slightly deeper cuff.

PERFORMANCE 8/10

These kept feet warm and dry. Odour control was good, too, with little smell. They seemed fairly hard wearing, with no sign of fluff or bobbles on wear spots, and they also dried quite quickly after being washed.

Verdict

A well-made, general-purpose unisex walking sock that did everything well. The colour range is good, too.



FOX RIVER ORGANIC MERINO WOOL £12 ★★★★★

CONTACT: 01404 549649

COMFORT & FIT 9/10

Very comfy, these hug the foot without being too tight. The soft Merino wool fabric felt very cosy against the skin, and the padding gave good protection underfoot and at the heel. Lovely smooth seams, too.

PERFORMANCE 8/10

Feet remained at an even temperature, and also stayed dry and smell-free. The wool fluffed up a little with wear and washing, but they dried fairly quickly. The natural colour tested won't suit everyone, but there are others available.

Verdict

A well-made, well-priced sock (there's a women's version too) that will be a welcome addition to your wardrobe.

