

# Walking through packed snow and ice with a little more confidence

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January 24, 2007



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:: Wendy :: invited several her friends to join her in some tea two weeks ago, and during the conversation, LaCroix recommended a product called Yaktrax. It's a lightweight little mesh that straps to the bottom of your shoe and acts like miniature tire chains, but for your shoes. Two of my friends acted on this tip immediately and had their pairs ready in time for our next snowstorm. I, on the other hand, was slow to act and was caught unprepared. It was a sight to behold. Not the storm but the effect of the storm on traffic. I had never before seen a traffic jam on Microsoft Way. (A friend of mine reported that it took somebody on his team forty-five minutes just to get from level 2 to level 1 of the parking garage!) One of my colleagues had an eye on the weather and left as soon as it started turning bad. We called his mobile phone two hours later to find out how the commute was. "Was? I'm still on the road!" It ultimately took three hours to travel what normally takes 30 minutes. Based on what was obviously a regional traffic standstill, several of us decided simply to wait it out. We grabbed dinner in the cafeteria (which was, not surprisingly, much busier than the cafeterias normally are in the evening), and returned to our offices, where we ran across one of our corridor-mates coming into the building. "Don't go out there. It took me a half hour just to get to Building Q." Building Q was the building right next door. I decided to walk home, and even at the late hour, traffic near Microsoft campus was still gridlocked. I found myself walking significantly faster than the cars were moving (or, more often, not moving). If only I had a walker, I could have shuffled down the sidewalk faster than the cars. That would really have showed them. Anyway, back to the Yaktrax. My friends loaned me a pair since I was walking to and from the bus stop because the roads in my neighborhood were covered in ice, and unlike some people, I had the presence of mind not to drive under such conditions. (For those who care, the bus stop is on a major road that remained navigable.) My review: Yaktrax worked great. Small, lightweight, somewhat of a struggle to put on (probably easier to do sitting down). It's not like walking with crampons; there are no spikes. You can wear them onto the bus without any qualms, and you can even walk on carpet without causing damage. I don't recommend walking on linoleum with them, however, because the coils don't grip onto the slick surface. Despite the ad copy, I wouldn't recommend running with them on ice. They

enable you to walk on snow or on snow-covered ice at a normal pace, and they add enough grip to take what used to be “impossible to walk without slipping and falling on the ice” and turns it into “you can walk if you go carefully.”

You can get them on Amazon, of course, but I ordered mine from REI.

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