

Wading Boot Sole Replacement

by Julie Smith

Winter is here and it is time to start working on your gear. Will your wading boots make it another summer? If not you might want to think about replacing the felt sole if the rest of the boot is good for one more season. I have replaced mine several times so let me give you some tips, it is not that hard. You can just buy the soles and give them to one of the shoe repair places, or do it yourself. I bought my Korker brand studded soles from Nevada City Anglers for \$31 and it includes the glue and instructions. It has been my experience that the Korker brand felt soles will outlast the brand that comes on the boot from the factory.

1. The first order of business is removing the old soles. I like using a 1 inch Stanley chisel with the flat side of the chisel facing the boot. The wedge shape of the chisel peels up the sole pretty well. I sit on the concrete floor of my garage with the boot between my legs and work down slowly across the boot hitting the chisel with a hammer till the sole is peeled.
2. Next you need to prep the bottom of the boot getting off all the old glue. Don't worry if your old studded soles have worn indentions into the bottom of the boot where the studs were. I use a small Stanley Surform tool to plane the bottom of the boot smooth.
3. Next you need put the boot over the size 13 new sole and draw an outline with a Sharpie to where you are going to cut the new sole to fit your boot. If you are putting on studded soles this becomes important in where you want your studs to be on your boots. I had to remove 2 studs on the new sole and drill new holes for them because I have a size 8 foot. Make it a little bigger as you can always cut it again later. Even the sole comes out a little smaller after you cut it this will still work.
4. Get a brand new blade for your razor knife before you start cutting the soles to size. Try to concentrate on cutting straight down around the sole so you don't get an angle cut. In other words you want a 90-degree angle from the flat part of your sole and your cut.
5. Follow the directions for gluing on the package, which calls for two coats of glue. Use it sparingly as I don't know of anywhere that sells that brand of glue if you run out. If you have any left over I like to seal around the edges of the sole where it meets the boot to seal any gaps at the end of the project. I would especially do this in the toe area. The directions called for taping on the sole after gluing to get out air pockets. I tapped vigorously!
6. Let the boots set up 24 hours and do your final trim of the sole and seal the gaps around the edges now if you have left over glue.
7. Go fishing!