



Joe Shirk puts PAWZ boots on his dog Renfrew, a 2-year-old Havanese, when he takes his pet on a daily walk on Downtown sidewalks and riverfront trails.

Companies and public relations firms send lots of e-mails about dog and cat products, but the best product pitches come from readers of Pet Tales. The latest batch of tips include boots that actually stay on dog paws and an inexpensive paw-washing device.

Joe and Rosemarie Shirk e-mailed a picture of their white Havanese, Renfrew, wearing what appeared to be orange balloons on her paws. "You might want to look at this product. Our dog wears them year-round when outside," the Shirks said. The balloons were PAWZ dog boots, described on the company website (<http://pawzdogboots.com>) as disposable, reusable, waterproof and made from natural rubber with no zippers or straps. "We've tried boots on other dogs but they were clumsy, they kept coming off and the dogs didn't like them," Mr. Shirk said.

PAWZ boots are "thin enough to let her feel the ground, and she isn't aware she has them on," Mrs. Shirk said.

Renfrew, 2, is walked daily on Pittsburgh sidewalks and riverfront trails. Weighing just 8 pounds, she is fit enough to walk as far as 8 miles, round trip, from the Shirk's Downtown residence to the SouthSide Works. Renfrew wears boots year-round because snow, salt, rain and mud would make a mess of the long white hair on her feet and legs, her owners said. Renfrew's unusual name, by the way, is also the name of a small Butler County town that is the birthplace of many of Mrs. Shirk's relatives.

PAWZ boots come in a variety of sizes and colors. Prices vary at stores and websites, but generally they are \$13-\$19 for 12 boots. The Shirks said a pair lasts up to three months. PAWZ are sold at Woody's Dog Wash & Pet Boutique in South Park, Larry's Laundromutt in Sewickley and online, where the boots get glowing reviews from dog owners.