

The AKU Croda DFS GTX stands out in *Trail* magazine's "Six of the best winter boots" feature for its exceptional comfort and support on rugged terrain. With a lightweight yet durable design, it excels in providing a secure fit, making it ideal for long hikes. The boot's DFS (Dual Fit System) technology enhances stability and control, while the GORE-TEX lining ensures waterproof protection, keeping feet dry in all conditions. Its grippy Vibram sole delivers superb traction, making it a versatile choice for outdoor enthusiasts seeking performance and reliability on the trail.

Aku Croda DFS GTX £445

With cutting-edge materials, plus plenty of fancy tech, AKU's Croda DFS GTX is an impressive package. It's a lightweight yet very capable B2 mountaineering boot that excels on steep ground, especially on mixed rock, snow and ice. It uses a synthetic construction rather than leather but incorporates tough materials, including aramid fibres (the same stuff used in bulletproof vests).

The last is built on AKU's Elica natural stride system. It proved to be among the most consistently comfortable winter boots we tested. The DFS – dual fit system – is a clever two-zone lacing arrangement that enables you to fine-tune the fit to minimise heel slip and maximise precision on technical terrain. The ankle cuff is nicely padded but not restrictive. Only the Vibram Litebase outsole limits comfort a little, largely because it has been reduced in thickness to save weight. This helps prevent that heavy-legged feel but can leave you a little footsore.

On test it proved to be stable, supportive and precise, with reliable traction underfoot. It's just as competent when fitted with C2 semi-automatic crampons – you could climb some pretty high grades in the Croda. It's probably overkill for winter hillwalking. That's not to say it wouldn't do the job, but there are cheaper boots that would fulfil the brief.



TOP PERFORMERS,
BUT ONLY IF YOU CAN
JUSTIFY THE PRICE

- **WEIGHT** 650G per boot (size 8)
 - **MEN'S SIZES** 6-13
 - **WOMEN'S SIZES** 3.5-9
 - **UPPER** Kevlar fibre and PU film overlay with rubber rand
 - **WATERPROOF LINING** Gore-Tex
- Performance Comfort

Verdict

A lightweight and precise, modern boot with superb technical ability on steep and tricky terrain – but such performance comes at a premium price point.

Features	★★★★★
Weight	★★★★★
Comfort	★★★★★
Performance	★★★★★
Value	★★★★★

OVERALL SCORE 84%