

Troop 101 Wilderness Survival

Winter can be an unforgiving time of year that requires a unique set of outdoor living skills.

- Keeping warm is the most important part of cold weather camping.
- Wearing cotton or other moisture-retaining fabrics puts you at risk for serious heat loss.
- *Blue Jeans, cotton T-shirts are examples of moisture-retaining clothes and should NOT be worn.*
- Dry set of clothes packed (including socks and underwear) in a plastic bag left behind in a car in case of emergency.

The advantage to layering, of course, is that when working hard and starting to overheat, you can simply take off an insulating layer (usually a fleece jacket or vest), replace your windproof shell, and you're on your way. When inactive and cooling down, you can replace the insulating layer.

Winter clothing keeps you warm primarily by trapping warm air next to your body (insulation). But when being active in winter and spending multiple days in the same clothes, insulation alone is not enough. It has to stay dry, not just from the outside in, but from the inside out.

Use C-O-L-D method to assure staying warm.

- C - Clean

Since insulation is only effective when heat is trapped by dead air spaces, keep your insulating layers clean and fluffy. Dirt, grime, and perspiration can mat down those air spaces and reduce the warmth of a garment.

- O - Overheating

Avoid overheating by adjusting the layers of your clothing to meet the outside temperature and the exertions of your activities. Excessive sweating can dampen your garments and cause chilling later on.

- L - Loose Layers

A steady flow of warm blood is essential to keep all parts of your body heated. Wear several loosely fitting layers of clothing and footwear that will allow maximum insulation without impeding your circulation.

- D - Dry

Damp clothing and skin can cause your body to cool quickly, possibly leading to frostbite and hypothermia. Keep dry by avoiding cotton clothes that absorb moisture. Always brush away snow that is on your clothes before you enter a heated area. Keep the clothing around your neck loosened so that body heat and moisture can escape instead of soaking several layers of clothing.

Clothing Tips

A. Footwear.

- As with other clothing, the layer system is also the answer for footwear. Start with a pair of silk, nylon, or thin wool socks next to your skin.
- With today's synthetic clothing, socks are the only thing you need to change during the day in the backcountry (dry feet are absolutely essential to preventing frostbite). Bring a pair of insulating socks for each day.
- Keep with a plastic bag for storing each separately
- Then layer on several pairs of heavier wool socks.

When and if your feet become damp, change into another pair of dry socks at the first opportunity

- Boots, waterproof and roomy enough for thick socks and toe-wiggling to prevent frostbite

B. Underwear.

- Synthetic underpants
- Thermal or polypropylene
- Thick insulating socks

C. Mittens and Gloves.

- Mittens allow your fingers to be in direct contact with each other. They will keep your hands warmer than regular gloves that cover each finger.
- Select mittens that are filled with foam insulation, or pull on wool gloves and cover them with a nylon overmitt.
- Long cuffs on your gloves will keep wind and snow from getting in.
- Heavy gloves or mittens (mittens conserve heat better); shell mittens of waterproof/breathable material -plus extra pair in case one is lost

D. Parka and/or Overcoat.

- Fleece vest
- Your coat or parka is the most important piece of your winter clothing.
- It needs to be large enough to fit over extra clothing without cutting off blood flow, and allowing ventilation to keep moisture away from your body.
- A large permanently attached hood will prevent heat loss around your head and neck.
- Down jacket, preferably with waterproof/breathable outer material
- Shell pants, waterproof/breathable
- Shell jacket with hood, waterproof/breathable
- Neck scarf

E. Headgear.

- The stocking hat is the warmest thing you can cover your head with in cold weather.
- Get one that is large enough to pull down over your ears. Also ski masks are great in the winter and can help in keeping your neck and face warm as well.
- Noses and ears can be very easily frostbitten, so a scarf or face mask can be an invaluable item to have.
- Hat (fleece or wool)
- Brimmed cap for warm, sunny days
- Goggles (for wind and snow)
- Sunglasses, sunscreen and lip balm with sunblock

F. Sleepwear.

- Sweats and thermal underwear to sleep in. Keep the thermals and sweats for sleeping in only.
- Never should you sleep in the same clothes that you have worn all day.

Clothes that are worn for the day need to be put into a plastic zip lock bag – they have an odor that has an attraction for wild life.

TIPS FOR A GREAT TRIP

- The sleeping bag doesn't heat you, you heat it. So use this rule, "Thickness is warmth", to keep this heat. If you're cold, add some more insulation (blankets, clothes, more newspaper).
- **DO NOT SLEEP IN BOTTOM OF BAG:** Your breath contains water. If you close your bag with your head inside, then this water sticks to the bag. Wear a hat to keep your head warm.
- Goose-down is the warmest for the weight, and should be included for rest stops and while hanging around camp, so that you can maintain a constant body temperature between exercising and resting. It also compresses easily for stuffing into a pack. But don't break a sweat while wearing it; it dries poorly and won't keep you warm when it's wet the way fleece or other synthetics do.
- **CHANGE CLOTHES:** *NEVER* sleep in wet clothes. Even perspiration will chill you at night.
- **EAT A CANDY BAR:** This increases your metabolism (moves your blood faster) and it helps keep you warm.
- **GO TO THE BATHROOM BEFORE BED:** This saves you a middle of the night trip in the cold.
- **PUT TOMORROW'S CLOTHES UNDER BAG:** This heats up clothes for tomorrow's cold morning and also provides more insulation.
- **FLUFF UP YOUR BAG:** Always fluff up bag before using to create the thickness important in keeping warm.
- **MOST IMPORTANT, KEEP IT DRY:** Keep all your sleeping gear dry and follow these rules, and winter camp should prove to be a rewarding experience.

RECOMMENDED CLOTHING FOR TWO DAY WINTER CAMP

In addition or in substitution to what you would normally bring to camp, bring:

- 2 shirts (wool, best, or flannel)
- 2 pair's wool or synthetic pants (Strongly recommend against cotton pants like jeans. They absorb moisture like a sponge).
- Thermal or polypropylene underwear
- Boots (WATERPROOFED)
- 2 pairs of heavy socks (wool recommended)
- 2 pairs lighter socks (polypropylene is best)
- Windbreaker (as is or part of heavier jacket)
- Stocking cap (wool is best)
- Parka or heavy jacket
- Mittens, (WOOL, gloves not recommended except as extra pair)
- Sweats and thermal underwear to sleep in
- Extra shoes

Source for most of this was found in: Mountain survival.com