

Cold Weather Camping Tips

- Fail to Plan = Plan to Fail
- Remember **C O L D**:
 - **C** Clean - dirty clothes lose their loft and get you cold.
 - **O** Overheat - never get sweaty, strip off layers to stay warm but not too hot.
 - **L** Layers - Dress in synthetic layers for easy temperature control.
 - **D** Dry - wet clothes (and sleeping bags) also lose their insulation.
- **COTTON KILLS!** Do not bring cotton. Staying dry is the key to staying warm. Air is an excellent insulator and by wearing several layers of clothes you will keep warm.
- Remember the 3 W's of layering - Wicking inside layer, Warmth middle layer(s) and Wind/Water outer layer. Wicking should be a polypropylene material as long underwear and also sock liner. Warmth layer(s) should be fleece or wool. The Wind/Water layer should be Gore-Tex or at least 60/40 nylon.
- If you're camping in the snow, wear snow pants over your regular clothing
- Bring extra hand covering - mittens are warmer than gloves.
- Bring 2 changes of socks per day.
- Everyone must be dry by sundown. No wet (sweaty) bodies or wet inner clothing.
- Dress right while sleeping. Change into clean, dry clothes before bed. Your body makes moisture and your clothes hold it in - by changing into dry clothes you will stay warmer and it will help keep the inside of your sleeping bag dry. Wearing wool socks and long underwear (tops and bottoms) in the sleeping bag is OK.
- Put on tomorrow's t-shirt and underwear at bedtime. That way you won't be starting with everything cold next to your skin in the morning.
- Wear a stocking cap to bed, even if you have a mummy bag.
- Put tomorrow's clothes in your bag with you. This is especially important if you're small of stature. It can be pretty hard to warm up a big bag with a little body, the clothes cut down on that work.
- Put a couple of long-lasting hand warmers into your boots after you take them off. Your boots will dry out during the night.
- Use a couple of hand warmers and sleep with one between your legs (warms the femoral artery) and with one at your feet. Toss them into your sleeping bag before you get in. Some of the toe/hand warmers will last 8 hours.
- Eat a high-energy snack before bed, then brush your teeth. The extra fuel will help your body stay warm. Take a Snickers bar to bed and eat it if you wake up chilly in the night.
- Use a sleeping bag that is appropriate for the conditions. Two +20°F sleeping bags, one inside the other will work to lower the rating of both bags.
- Use a bivvy sack to wrap around your sleeping bag. You can make a cheap version of this by getting an inexpensive fleece sleeping bag. It isn't much more than a blanket with a zipper but it helps lower the rating by as much as 10 degrees.
- Use a sleeping bag liner. There are silk and fleece liners that go inside the sleeping bag. They will lower your sleeping bag's rating by up to 10 degrees. Or buy an inexpensive fleece throw or blanket and wrap yourself in it inside the sleeping bag.
- Don't sleep directly on the ground. Get a closed cell foam pad to provide insulation between your sleeping bag and the ground. A foam pad cushions and insulates. The air pockets are excellent in providing good insulation properties. Use more than one insulating layer below you – it's easy to slide off the first one. No cots or air mattresses! Better to lay on 30° earth instead of -10° air.
- Extra blankets, Extra blankets, Extra blankets, Extra blankets!