

Winter Camping & Hypothermia

Rules and Instructions for Keeping Warm in the Sack

- 1. REMEMBER:** 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 like (blankets, clothes, more newspaper) It will be warmer on the ground with a ground pad than on a cot. Cold air can circulate under the cot.
- 2. 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 and makes it wet and cold. Wear a woolen hat to keep your head warm.
- 3. CHANGE CLOTHES:** *NEVER* sleep in wet clothes. Even perspiration will chill you at night. Put a fresh pair of socks on.
- 4. EAT A CANDY BAR:** This increases your metabolism (moves your blood faster) and it helps keep you warm. Do this before you brush your teeth. Remember no food in tents!
- 5. GO TO THE BATHROOM RIGHT BEFORE YOU CRAWL INTO BED:** This saves you a middle of the night trip in the cold.
- 6. DO NOT DRY "WET" CLOTHES IN SLEEPING BAG:** Moisture will travel from wet clothes to sleeping bag.
- 7. PUT TOMORROW'S CLOTHES UNDER BAG:** This heats up clothes for tomorrow's cold morning and also provides more insulation.
- 8. FLUFF UP YOUR BAG:** Always unpack and fluff up your sleeping bag when you set your tent up. This gives the bag time to expand fully throughout the day to create the thickness important in keeping you warm.
- 8. USE YOUR JACKET TO INCREASE YOUR SLEEPING BAG WARMTH:** Zip up your jacket and slip it over the bottom of your sleeping bag like a sock. This adds lots of extra warmth to your sleeping bag. If your feet get cold you will get cold.
- 9. 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.

IMPORTANT STUFF TO KEEP IN MIND

- 1. Clothing does not make you warm; it is your body processes that keep you warm. Clothing merely provides the insulation to preserve your warmth.**
- 2. Layered thickness is warmth.**
- 3. Keep your torso warm so that it can send heat to the extremities.**
- 4. Avoid sweating by ventilation.**
- 5. Keep rain and wind out of your insulation.**
- 6. Use your head. Keep it covered when you're cold; remove cap as you warm up to avoid sweating.**
- 7. Strain one muscle against another to maintain metabolism.**
- 8. Wool clothing is best but needs wind protection. Synthetics are second best. Down is OK, as long as it stays dry, and cotton is a poor choice.**
- 9. If your feet are cold, put a hat on.**
- 10. Remember the word "COLD" -**

Keep your clothing - Clean.

Avoid ----- Overheating

Wear clothing ----- Loose

Keep it ----- Dry

RECOMMENDED CLOTHING FOR TWO DAY WINTER CAMP

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

- 2 shirts (wool is the best, or flannel)**
- 2 pairs wool or synthetic pants (Strongly recommend against cotton pants like jeans. They absorb moisture like a sponge).**
- Fishnet, 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)**
- Balaclava or stocking cap (wool is best)**
- Parka or heavy jacket**
- Mittens, (WOOL, gloves not recommended except as extra pair)**

- **Extra shoes, Hiking boots are OK, but NOT TENNIS SHOES!**

It is always best to stay dry when camping in the snow, but you can expect to get wet and should be prepared. Boots or other shoes that are not waterproof will normally start getting the feet wet and cold after less than 15 minutes in the snow (depending on temperature, the colder it is, the longer the feet stay dry). Low top shoes will not keep the snow out of the shoes. Gaiters can be made from plastic bags and a strong tape like duck tape. Do not cover the bottom of you shoes with plastic; doing so will cause you to lose almost all of your traction (and you will fall down!).

Unless your parents are planning to buy some of the items on this list anyway, do not run out and start spending lots of money on clothing and equipment. If all your pants are jeans, for example, bring three or four pairs and change when wet. If you are in doubt or have questions, call one of the troop leaders for advice.