

# Winter Camping Tips

## CLOTHING FOR WINTER CAMPING

IN COLD WEATHER, WEAR LOOSE FITTING CLOTHES IN LAYERS OR "SHELLS" KEEP IT DRY!

START WITH "LONG JOHNS" - NOT TOO TIGHT.

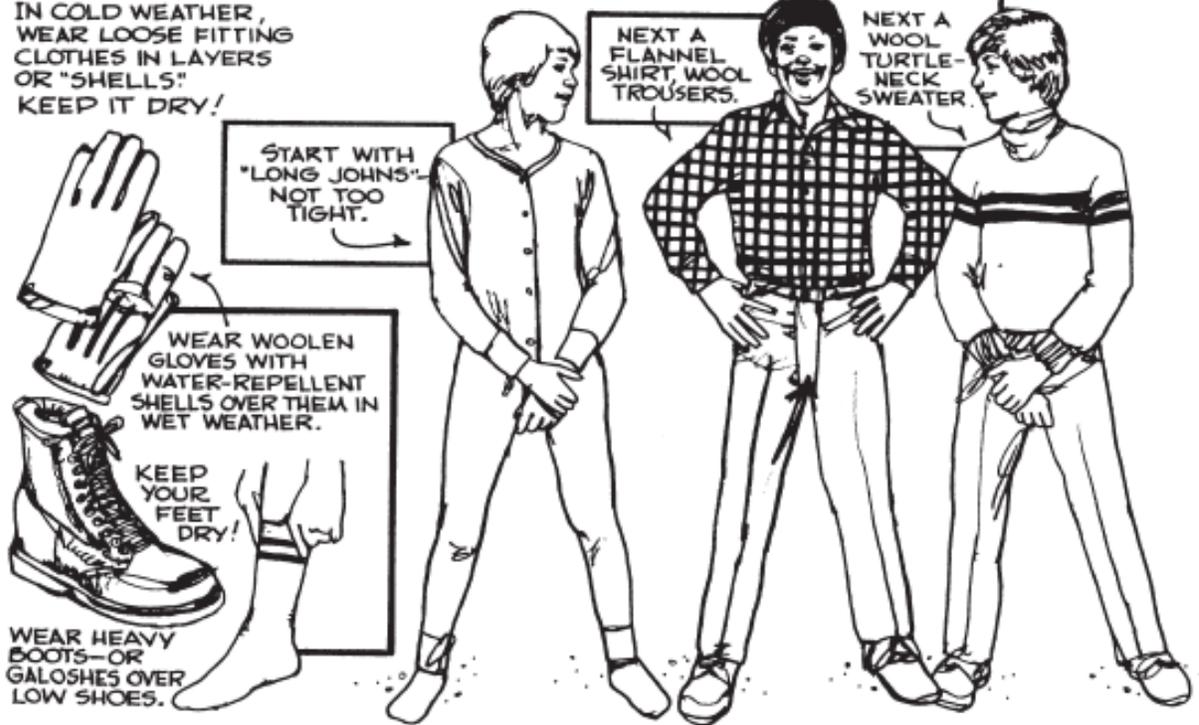
NEXT A FLANNEL SHIRT, WOOL TROUSERS.

NEXT A WOOL TURTLE-NECK SWEATER.

WEAR WOOLEN GLOVES WITH WATER-REPELLENT SHELLS OVER THEM IN WET WEATHER.

KEEP YOUR FEET DRY!

WEAR HEAVY BOOTS - OR GALOSHES OVER LOW SHOES.



ADD A LIGHT JACKET, WOOL CAP, HEAVY BOOTS.

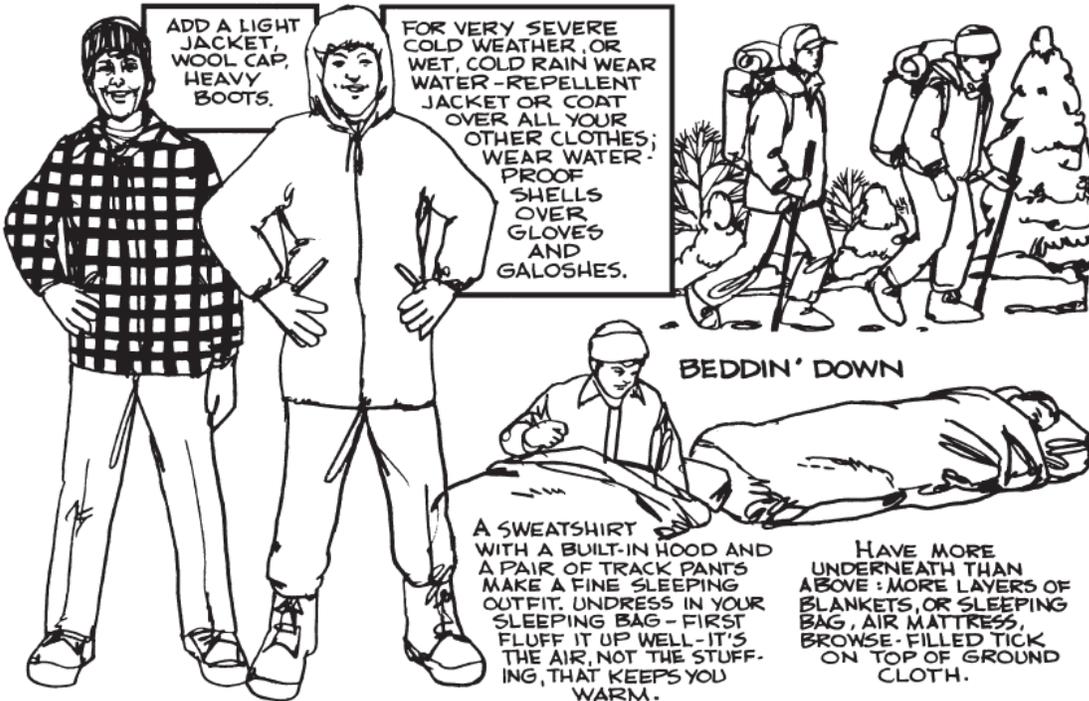
FOR VERY SEVERE COLD WEATHER, OR WET, COLD RAIN WEAR WATER-REPELLENT JACKET OR COAT OVER ALL YOUR OTHER CLOTHES; WEAR WATER-PROOF SHELLS OVER GLOVES AND GALOSHES.



## BEDDIN' DOWN

A SWEATSHIRT WITH A BUILT-IN HOOD AND A PAIR OF TRACK PANTS MAKE A FINE SLEEPING OUTFIT. UNDRESS IN YOUR SLEEPING BAG - FIRST FLUFF IT UP WELL - IT'S THE AIR, NOT THE STUFFING, THAT KEEPS YOU WARM.

HAVE MORE UNDERNEATH THAN ABOVE: MORE LAYERS OF BLANKETS, OR SLEEPING BAG, AIR MATTRESS, BROWSE-FILLED TICK ON TOP OF GROUND CLOTH.



**WHAT KEEPS YOU WARM?** - When you really study what keeps you warm, it becomes clear that it is you! Your body produces all the heat you need. Your clothing is designed to hold in whatever heat you need to feel comfortable under a variety of conditions and activities. You will notice all our clothing is loose. That is because

tight clothing constricts the flow of blood so the body heat cannot move around - just like when a faucet is turned off. That is why tight boots mean cold feet and a tight belt means cold legs.

## C O L D

C.O.L.D. - That is an easily-remembered key to keeping warm.

- C** - Keep yourself and your clothes **CLEAN**. Dirt and body oils which build up on clothing destroy its insulating properties.
- O** - Avoid **OVERHEATING**. Clothing is designed to be taken off or added to in layers to maintain an even body heat.
- L** - Wear clothes **LOOSE** and in **LAYERS**.
- D** - Keep **DRY**. Wet clothing removes body heat 240 times faster than it will dissipate through dry clothing. Wet is trouble.

**VENTILATION** - To regulate the amount of heat, yet not get overheated and wet with perspiration, adjustments can be made to loosen up the waist, the cuffs and the neck opening, allowing more heat to escape.

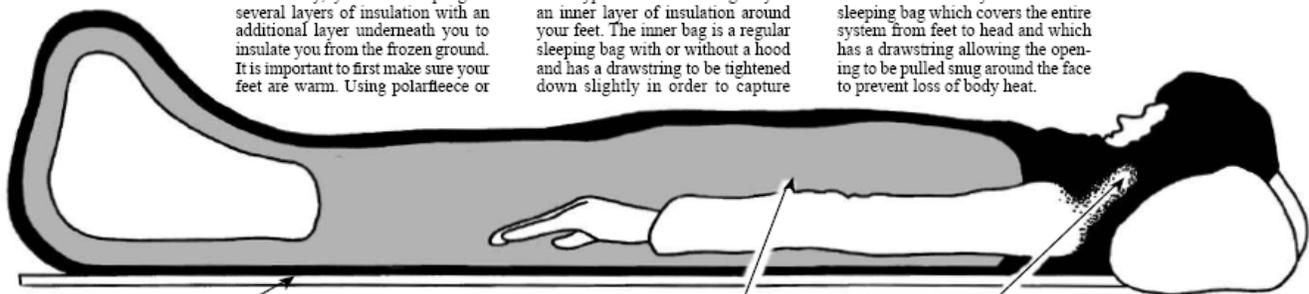
**WET, WINDY, COLD** - This is the combination that spells danger to the winter camper. We avoid it by keeping dry, getting out of the wind when possible, and wearing the correct clothes.

### Your Sleeping System Is Designed to Keep You Warm

Essentially, you are sleeping in several layers of insulation with an additional layer underneath you to insulate you from the frozen ground. It is important to first make sure your feet are warm. Using polarfleece or

other types of booties will give you an inner layer of insulation around your feet. The inner bag is a regular sleeping bag with or without a hood and has a drawstring to be tightened down slightly in order to capture

heat. The outside layer is a hooded sleeping bag which covers the entire system from feet to head and which has a drawstring allowing the opening to be pulled snug around the face to prevent loss of body heat.



**Foam Pad  
Stops Cold From Below**

**SLEEPING PADS** - These are essential for insulating the body from the cold ground. They come in three types: 1. Closed cell foam; 2. Open cell foam, used with a closed cell pad; 3. Insulated air mattress or Therman Rest® style pad.

**Three-quarter Bag, or Bag Liner**

**Hooded Outer Bag Covers Everything**

**TYPES OF BAGS** - Inner bags and outer bags may be made of synthetic fiber which can be stuffed compactly for travel. These are particularly tailored for long distance trips in the winter. The cold weather outer bag is very warm and while somewhat bulky, can be compressed down into a serviceable size for travel.

### Your Sleeping System Works Best When Kept Clean And Dry

On expeditions away from the camp, always use the buddy system. Buddies can watch each other for frostbite (specks of white on the skin) and make sure no one gets lost or wet, with the consequent danger of hypothermia.

If a Scout has a cap without earflaps, have him tie a neckerchief or scarf over the cap to cover his ears.

In wind, tie a neckerchief or scarf over the nose and ears and let the point hang over the chin.

If mittens get wet, use an extra pair of dry woolen socks as mittens.

Use a wool cap or large woolen sock as a nightcap in cold weather. The body loses lots of warmth through an exposed head.

For a bed warmer, fill a canteen with piping hot water.

Tie trouser bottoms over the tops of shoes or boots to keep out snow, pebbles, etc.

Paper (even newspaper) wrapped around the legs, thighs, back, and chest will add insulation.

Remember that dampness in any form is the number one enemy to safety and comfort in cold weather. Wet feet are especially bad.

For an emergency poncho, cut a slit in a plastic trash bag or an old shower curtain and pull it over your head.

Do not eat ice or snow on the trail. It is not pure and it can reduce the body temperature. Melted snow or ice can be used for drinking only after boiling.

On a slippery trail, stay far back from cliff or canyon edges.

Some more tips –

- Fail to Plan = Plan to Fail
- Always bring a bit more than what you think you'll need – water, food, clothes.
- Make sure that you have a good knowledge of the signs of frostbite and hypothermia. You should be able to recognize it in others and in yourself. Tell someone right away if you or another scout is showing signs of cold-related problems.
- Stay hydrated. It's easy to get dehydrated in the winter. Eat and drink plenty of carbs.
- Keep out of the wind if you can. A rain fly for a tent can be pitched to serve as a wind break. The wind chill factor can often be considerable and can result in effective temperatures being much lower than nominal.
- Bring extra WATER. It's easy to get dehydrated in the winter. You aren't visibly sweating, so you don't think to drink water, but since the air is so dry, you lose a LOT of water through breathing. Drink lots of water!
- Bring extra food that doesn't need to be heated or cooked. Granola bars, trail mix, etc.
- Keep a pot of hot water available for cocoa or Cup-a-Soup – these warm from the inside.
- Always eat hot meals (breakfast, lunch, & dinner.) Dutch ovens are the best – they keep the food hot longer. It doesn't need to be fancy DO cooking. Meals should be 1-pot meals to keep cleanup to a minimum. Don't get too fancy with the meals - it's hard to chop onions & carrots at -10°F with gloves on. Prep all meals at home in the warmth of the kitchen.
- Shelter the cooking area from wind (walls of tarps, etc.)
- Fill coffee/cook pots with water before bed. It's hard to pour frozen water, but easy to thaw it if it's already in the pot.
- 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.
- Use plastic grocery bags or bread bags over socks. This keeps your boots dry and you can easily change those wet socks.
- Keep your hands and feet warm. Your body will always protect the core, so if your hands and feet are warm, your core will also likely be warm. If your hands or feet are cold, put on more layers, and put on a hat!
- 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 tomorrow's clothes in your sleeping bag with you. That way you won't be starting with everything cold next to your skin in the morning. It also helps you get warmer faster at night, as there is less air in the bag to warm up.
- Wear a stocking cap to bed, even if you have a mummy bag.
- Put a couple of long-lasting hand warmers into your boots after you take them off. Your boots will dry out during the night.
- Fill a couple of Nalgene water bottles with warm water and sleep with one between your legs (warms the femoral artery) and with one at your feet. Or use toe/hand warmers. 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.
- Most cold weather bags are designed to trap heat. The proper way to do this is to pull the drawstrings until the sleeping bag is around your face, not around your neck. If the bag also has a draft harness make sure to use it above the shoulders and it snugs up to your neck to keep cold air from coming in and warm air from going out.
- Don't burrow in - keep your mouth and nose outside the bag. Moisture from your breath collecting in your bag is a quick way to get real cold. Keep the inside of the bag dry.
- Put a trash bag over the bottom half of your sleeping bag to help hold in the heat. A zipped up coat pulled over the foot of a sleeping bag makes an extra layer of insulation.
- 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.
- In an emergency, cardboard makes a great insulator. Old newspapers are also good insulation. A layer of foam insulation works too.
- Bring a piece of cardboard to stand on when changing clothes. This will keep any snow on your clothes off your sleeping bag, and help keep your feet warmer than standing on the cold ground.
- A space blanket or silver lined tarp on the floor of the tent or under your sleeping bag will reflect your heat back to you.
- No cots or air mattresses! Better to lay on 30° earth instead of -10° air.
- Sleep in quinzees or igloos. These are warmer than tents since you've got an insulating layer of snow between you and the outside air, instead of just a thin nylon layer.
- If in tents, leave the tent flaps/zippers vented a bit, it cuts down on interior frost.
- Drain your bladder before you go to bed. Having to go in the middle of the night when it is 5 degrees out chills your entire body. Drink all day, but stop one hour before bed.