

Cold Weather Camping

Sleeping Systems

There is no perfect sleeping system for everyone

Use what works for you

Some people are always either hot or cold regardless of the weather

Sleeping Bags

Store bags flat if possible to prevent compression of the loft

The loft is what traps warm air and keeps you warm

Sleeping bags do not heat themselves

They trap your heat and that is what keeps you warm

If second sleeping bag use put UNDER you and not around

60% of heat loss is thru the ground, not above you

This is due to the compression of sleeping bag material

If using polystyrene under you, then wrap around you

Buying a New Bag

Check zippers from INSIDE and outside for ease of use

Check for one with baffles around zippers to retain warmth

Get a bag that cinches around the shoulders or you lose heat

Insulation

Get up off the ground!

Get Polystyrene External Insulation pad (you can make one)

Use the highest insulation rating (R rating) possible

It comes in 4x8 sheets

Use of a few blankets or an extra sleeping with tarp under it is an alternative

Use a liner to keep the bag clean and an extra 10 – 15 degrees to the bag

Air Mattress

Only use it IF you use padding under it (polystyrene, sleeping bag, blankets)

Otherwise, the air will cool in the mattress and draw heat from you

Misc Sleeping Ideas

Keep clothes for morning in sleeping bag to keep them warm

Cotton OK to sleep in if it makes you comfortable

It will NOT wick moisture and needs to be changed in morning

Be sure it is clean and dry if going to use cotton

Sleep in clean clothes you will wear as a 1st layer in the morning

Be sure sleeping clothes are clean and dry

You MUST change at night before bed

Even change underwear and socks – IMPORTANT to be DRY

Use a shammy to dry yourself before you put on fresh clothes

Keep clothes in a Ziploc bag to keep dry and fresh

Clothing

Remember the Acronym **C O L D**

Clean

Over Heating (avoid it)

Layers (use loose layers)

Dry (keep dry)

1st Layer is the Wicking Layer (to take moisture away from your skin)

This layer includes socks, underwear, t-shirts and long johns

Wear wicking socks with wool socks over them

Change them in the morning, afternoon and again at bedtime

Change more often if needed

Silk or Polypropylene material works the best

Can find clothes at Wal-Mart, Target, Sam's, Campmor, Ebay

You can wear cotton but you will have to change it often

This is because cotton retains water

Cotton has a 10-1 rule

You need 10 pairs of cotton for each pair of wicking clothing

This is due to having to change it often

2nd Layer is the Warming Layer

This layer includes sweatshirts, sweatpants, sweaters, etc...

Fleece, Wool or Polyester works best

Wool stays warm when wet (retains 65% of heat even when soaked)

If possible, use suspenders so heat can travel up and down easier

Baggy is better to create warm air pockets

3rd Layer is the Wind and Waterproof Layer

This layer should be tight to trap the warm air while repelling water and wind

Nylon pants work great

Jeans are neither water nor wind resistant

Other Layers

Boots should be big enough for extra socks

Boots should be waterproof and insulated to keep feet warm

Keep boots open on ride to campsite to keep from sweating

Mittens are better than gloves

Should be water and wind resistant and those with liners even better

Knit mittens or gloves bad

OK if used as a liner under wind and water resistance

Wear a balaclava to keep your head and neck warm

Other Things to Remember

If your feet are cold, put on a hat – your head is probably cold

Activity keeps you warm

Be sure to 'vent' to avoid sweating and getting your clothes damp

Keep These Three Parts of Your Body Warm to Feel Warmer

Both Wrists and Neck

Keep water bottle in sleeping bag or it may freeze

Alternatively, keep upside down (freezes from top down)

Keep boots in sleeping bag as well (in a Ziploc bag)

Alternatively, keep laces WIDE open so they do not freeze shut

Do not bring wet equipment into tent at night as it becomes a source of condensation

Plan for a LOT of changes and bring a lot of spare clothes in case some get wet

With fewer daylight hours available – plan activities accordingly

Expect degraded performance from team members and equipment due to cold

People will tire more easily

Meal Prep

Eat before sleep to keep you warmer as body digests food

Food will take longer to heat and will cool quicker

Plan meals that generate calories

Stay hydrated

Hypothermia

It is VERY important to take a buddy with you everywhere to check for Hypothermia

When your core temperature is between 97 and 90 that is mild hypothermia

When your core temperature is below 90 that is severe hypothermia

Symptoms:

Abnormal Behavior

Loss of hats and mittens

Stumbling

Shivering

Loss of vision

Sluggish thinking and speech

Violent outbursts

Loss of dexterity

Check for Hypothermia

The Okpik Clap (check for dexterity):

Touch each finger to the thumb of same hand

If you cannot do it, you are in the 1st stages of hypothermia