



TIPS FOR WINTER CAMPING

There are two main components when it comes to camping in the winter season ...



WINTER CLOTHING

1. Stay Dry:

Wet clothing is uncomfortable in cold weather and leads to hypothermia or a low body temperature. People have been known to suffer from hypothermia in air temperatures in the 70s if they are wet. When you feel yourself starting to sweat, begin to remove clothing to aid in the cooling process and avoid getting your clothing wet.

- Remember, always change all of your clothes, including undergarments, before going to bed. During the day, your body produces moisture and oils that are absorbed in your clothing. That moisture will be enough to prevent you from having a restful and enjoyable night of sleep.

2. Layers:

Always dress in layers when out in cold weather situations. The best practice is to use a base layer, middle layer and an outer layer. Be sure these layers are all made of synthetic wicking materials or wool and not cotton. Cotton absorbs and traps moisture. Synthetic wicking materials will draw moisture away from your body and help keep you warm. Wool will absorb moisture similar to cotton. However, wool maintains the same insulation or R value whether it is wet or dry. It is one of the few materials that have that ability.

- Your outer layer should be waterproof. Rain gear does not offer much thermal protection; however, it does prevent your clothing from becoming wet due to rain and snow. In addition, it provides an excellent wind barrier.
- If you are dressed in your layers and are standing within 6 feet of a fire and can feel the heat on your skin through your layered clothing system, then that clothing system does not provide enough insulation to keep you warm and comfortable.



WINTER SLEEP SYSTEM



1. Stay Dry:

Again, don't use cotton sheets or blankets as part of your sleep system. Choose a sleeping bag that is rated for the temperature you will be camping in. For example, if you are camping in the southern U.S. you may only need a sleeping bag rated for 20 or 30 degrees. Taking and using a -20 degree bag in those conditions will cause you to perspire in your sleep which will in turn make you wet and cold, even in that heavy sleeping bag.

- Remember, never sleep with your head inside your sleeping bag. As you breathe, you expel moisture which will be trapped in your clothing and sleeping bag.

2. Layers:

If you have a light weight sleeping bag and want to increase the thermal value of the bag, add layers to increase that value. Again, never use cotton blankets. A fleece blanket or liner inside your sleeping bag will make your sleeping bag comfortable at anywhere from 10 to 15 degrees cooler than the bag is rated. If your bag is rated at 30 degrees, a fleece liner will change the bag to a 15 or 20 degree bag.

- A few tips about layers. Again, never use cotton fabrics. If you choose to use a mylar style emergency blanket as a layer, be sure to use it as the outermost layer in your system. The mylar blankets are excellent for radiating heat back to you; however, they are also excellent vapor barriers. Any moisture your body produces like sweat while you sleep will stay with you and absorb into your clothing which will lead to you becoming wet and cold.
- Also, layers that you can place between your sleeping system and the ground will help prevent the loss of body heat. Insulated mats, foam sleep pads or blankets are excellent choices for this. If none of them are available, even cardboard will work as an insulator. However, avoid using air mats that have no insulating foam inside. Mats that are only filled with air have no insulation value and the convection heat loss you suffer while your body tries to heat the air in the mat may be worse than the conductive heat loss you would suffer by direct contact with the floor.