

The Top 13 list to keep warm in winter

NO COTTON

Eat, eat, eat in winter = about 4000 calories

40% carbohydrates, 40% fat, 20% protein

Drink - water (2 1/2 quart minimum)

Don't sweat - keep sweat to a minimum

Feet & Seat lose heat by conduction

Wet hair loses heat 240x faster than dry hair

If your feet are cold, wear a HAT

Be an onion - layer your clothing and provide for ventilation

Air insulates - dead air spaces in clothes keeps you warm

Thickness = Warmth (the thicker the insulation, the warmer you are)

Wind protection - know the wind chill & use windproof garments

Use the Buddy system - remove snow from your buddy check for frostnip & frostbite on your buddy

Be physically fit

Dressing a scout for winter

You are taking scouts into two seasons [fall/spring & winter] and two conditions [wet or dry]. Winter clothing can be divided into three temperature categories: >50 degrees F, 20 to 50 degrees F, <20 degrees F and activity levels [low to high].

>50 degrees F
light poly short or long shirt
lt fleece vest
lt wt wind jacket
wind pants
liner socks
wool or poly socks
leg gaiters
nylon vest as outer garment

20 to 50 degrees F
light poly short or long shirt
non-cotton turtleneck
windproof breathable vest
lt poly long john bottoms
wind pant or lt wool pant
liner socks
wool or poly socks
leg gaiters
windproof outer shell
gloves, wrist warmers,
overmitts
2 neck/hat gaiters

<20 degrees F
use all of the 20to50 deg F
wear and add:
fleece jacket or wool sweater
leather mitts
handwarmer / wrist warmer
combo
heavy wool pants or quilted
nylon pants
windproof/breathable
balaclava

HOW TO PREPARE AT HOME FOR THE WINTER WEEKEND **The Boy Scouts of America define winter as any temperature below 50 degrees F.**

1. Polish or waterproof your boots.
2. Look at the checklist of things you need.
3. Bathe or shower to start off the trip clean and dry.
4. Dry your feet completely and apply a thin coating of antiperspirant deodorant (or talcum or foot powder) to help keep your feet from sweating. **DON'T USE ON FEET HAVING OPEN SORES.**
5. Make sure you have several plastic bags. These will be part of the vapor barrier system for your footgear. If you are wearing your boots for the ride to camp, you may want to leave your home wearing the vapor barrier as follows so that your socks and the inside of your boot remains completely dry: Onto your foot which has been treated with antiperspirant put a clean, dry nylon (or other thin material) sock. Next put a plastic bag on and then a heavy sock so that the plastic bag is sandwiched between the two socks. Now you can use another plastic bag to keep the outer sock dry if your boots get wet. This will keep your feet very warm provided your boots are not too tight. Additional plastic bags are good for carrying your wet clothes home.
6. Make sure the things you want to take are clean. This will take some planning on the part of each Scout. Know when your family's laundry is done, so that an important item is clean (and therefore warmer) and ready for you to pack. Don't make yourself do a special load of laundry..... plan ahead.
7. Eat a hearty meal before you depart. Think of this as fueling the furnace since you will need extra fuel to help keep you warm. Remember that a sleeping bag or coat is not warm; it is only insulation to keep your body heat close to your body.
8. **DO NOT WEAR JEWELRY.** Metal gets cold and conducts the heat away and can cause frostbite to occur at contact points, particularly the hands, ears and neck. Leave jewelry at home.
9. Panty hose makes a good first layer.
10. Pack a warm hat with a face mask and scarf.

WINTER CAMPOUT CONSIDERATIONS & THINGS TO BRING

Sleeping bag with fleece blanket

2 Foam pads

Rain gear or wind protection

Flashlight and extra batteries (cold eats batteries), extra bulb

Eating utensils, cup, bowl (plastic preferably)

Coat with hood, wool or synthetic

Sweater, fleece or wool

Hat and a spare

2 neck gaiters 2 pair wrist warmers and chemical hand warmers

Extra clothes & socks **NO COTTON**

Boots: sorrels type or insulated and rubber overshoes

Plastic bags for vapor barriers for the feet

Mittens and a spare pair (bring leather gloves for working around the cooking fire)

Toboggan or plastic sled

Water bottle and a way to keep it from freezing

Personal hygiene gear

Garbage bag

Lots of Scout Spirit Check your Scout Handbook for other items which you may want to bring

Optional: sunglasses or ski goggles, hand warmer packets

NO i-pods, MP-3 or electronic games. Anything with batteries is a liability.

Eat a hearty breakfast at home. Arrive with yourself and your clothing clean because body oils and perspiration will rob you of heat. In the cars do not wear your camping clothes, they will only get sweaty. Dress in loose layers and keep away from cotton garment, especially keep away from cotton socks and cotton long underwear.

No blue jeans, PERIOD. YOU WILL NOT GO IF YOU WEAR OR BRING THEM

Winter Leadership Skills

Safe Outing The perception of adventure and fun are the main reasons any Scout will participate in any high adventure activity such as cold weather camping. As leaders, we must recognize the seriousness of the activity. Cold weather, particularly in the heart of winter, presents us with an unforgiving environment. We will discover that typical tasks such as setting up a tent or fly cannot be done as fast as in the summer. Our comfort is continually challenged. Nevertheless, as a leader we realize that a **safe trip** is infinitely more important than any other trip goal. It can be helpful to assess the leaders' and Scouts' capabilities and then set limits for weather extremes. Communicate these limits to your Scouts and parents in order to build confidence. If they exceed your training or the group's capabilities, you must be prepared to cancel or terminate the event. It is much better to thrive on a cold weather outing than to "survive". In addition to the environmental concerns that must be understood and communicated to the Scouts, it is important to establish a **positive attitude** before and during the event. Frustration and fatigue can begin to take a toll when conditions are challenging. A cheerful can-do attitude is always helpful to encourage the group. During the preparation sessions, be sure to develop positive verbal and behavioral norms.

Leader Preparation **Physical fitness** preparation is essential in order to handle the added stresses on your body in cold weather. Leaders of any age may wish to discuss a fitness regime with their doctor. It is often useful to slowly acclimate yourself to the cold and vigorous activity. Leader fitness provides a great role model to your Scouts. Prior to a first cold weather campout **leaders should study winter camping techniques, cold weather physiology and proper nutrition**. There are many good resources available in print and on-line. A good first book is the BSA publication, [Okpik: Cold Weather Camping](#). Additionally, in many regions there are winter camping courses taught by experienced winter campers both inside and outside of Scouting. Take advantage of all of these resources but keep in mind that the Scout Leader's goal is to lead youth in winter activities that uphold the aims and methods of Scouting. You may find local Scouters in your council who would be willing to help you with cold weather camping.

As you learn various methods, **try things out yourself at home or at a local park**. Pitching a tent in your own backyard and sleeping out is a great way to test out your sleeping system. If you are getting cold make modifications, learning from the problems you face. Experience first hand getting up in the morning and preparing a nutritious breakfast. In this way you can test how your equipment works; you can analyze problem areas and make improvements. Selection of a winter campsite which offers protection from the wind is a priority.

Two-deep leadership may never be more important than on a winter campout. A more severe, unforgiving environment requires leaders to be more alert and watchful and experienced. Leaders may want to bring extra clothing to use if a Scout gets wet or cold. Leaders will want to be vigilant to detect early stages of hypothermia, frost nip or dehydration.

Leaders should assure that the cold weather campout has **program activities** throughout the day and perhaps even a night hike or night snowshoe hike to provide learning opportunities and physical activity to keep the Scouts warm. Use of a buddy system, where the buddies check each other and help remove snow from the other's clothes, gives the leaders another layer of watchfulness. Keeping dry and avoiding prolonged exposure to the wind are major safety issues that need attention.

Practical Skills **Age and Skill Appropriate Program**

Most troops beginning a winter outdoor program will have Scouts of various ages and skill levels. Cabin campouts with plenty of outdoor activity allows younger Scouts to become familiar with the fundamentals of cold weather camping. Outdoor games and cooking as well as instruction on setting up

a proper winter campsite would be good introductory topics. Older Scouts could camp outside with proper preparation and provide the younger Scouts with real life demonstrations of the fundamentals. In case of severe weather the cabin will be a fallback position for the troop. Younger Scouts will see the adventure awaiting them as they build skills. Older Scouts build confidence in their newly learned skills while providing role models and leadership to the troop. Clearly, moving beyond cabin camping requires an enthusiastic group of boy leaders to model and teach skills to the younger boys.

Practice at Home

As you begin to introduce winter camping to your unit, you may find that your troop meeting does not offer enough time to develop confidence and skills among the Scouts who are willing to try cold weather camping. You can use the weeks prior to your campout to build the anticipation for adventure. In fact, much of the confidence building can be done at home or in a few hours at a local park. After some detailed instruction at a troop meeting, have the Scouts (as buddies) sleep out in a tent in their own backyard, unheated garage or outbuilding, to test out their sleeping system. Ask the Scouts to report back on their test and tell what changes they would recommend.

On a weekend, go to a park and practice setting up tents and cooking using the troop's stoves. It is very important to know how your equipment will function in the cold. For instance, some stoves may not work properly in cold weather. If you find that your stoves will not function well in cold temperatures you must replace them with models that do. Practice cooking high calorie meals in the cold or better yet, take food that has been prepared at home and needs only warming. Meal preparation is a good opportunity to re-emphasize the greater nutritional requirements for cold weather. Likewise, drinking more water is important to combat dehydration in a winter environment. If the Scouts understand the importance of eating a proper winter diet and drinking adequate amounts of water, the more likely they will be to eat and drink even though they may not be hungry or thirsty.

Protecting the troop's equipment is a major consideration on a cold weather campout. It is amazing how much troop and personal equipment is lost if it falls into the snow. In some regions of the country a cold weather campout can suffer from mud more than from snow. You may have to think of new ways to protect tents and other valuable troop assets from damage. Scouts will need to exercise forethought and follow the agreed-upon routine for dealing with mud.

Communication You will need good communication to parents and Scouts. Scouts should tell a buddy or adult leader if they are cold and need some help. Simply practice as a group saying, "Mr. (leader), I'm cold. I need help." can break down the barrier.

Fabric places to seek out:

Zinck's in Berlin, Inc	outstanding prices for Polartec windbloc [\$1.50/yard]	1-330-893-7225
4568 state Route 39		
PO Box 153, Berlin, OH 44610		
Outdoor Wilderness Fabrics	www.owfinc.com	1-800-693-7467
123 E. Simplot Blvd		1-208-402-0110
Caldwell, Idaho 83605	they sell Gore-tex	
Mill Direct Textiles LLC	www.milldirecttextiles.com	1-978-686-7700
15 Union St.		
Lawrence, MA 01842		

Books for thought

Fieldbook for Canadian Scouting	Boy Scouts of Canada Scout Shop
1345 Baseline Rd., Box 5151 Station F	Ottawa, ON Canada K2C 3G7

Okpik Handbook The BSA Handbook Fieldbook BSA – purchase at Scout Service Center

Secrets of Warmth by Hal Weiss, 1992 , Cloudcap, ,Box 27344, Seattle, WA 98125