

Winter Clothing

Because the area around you may get cold during the winter you must have good winter clothing and gear. Having clothing and gear that will not stand up to the weather conditions could cause you to die.

It may sound cliché, but layering is the best approach to winter outerwear. Layering should consist of at least three layers: a base layer - thermal underwear of silk or synthetic cloth, a mid layer such as a long sleeve shirt or sweater and an outer layer. Many people with extreme cold experience will wear a base layer, a long sleeve shirt, a sweater, a lighter weight jacket and then their parka. Some wear a down vest for core warmth which also provides additional warmth in extreme cold when they will not be active. A down vest and mid-weight jacket can provide warmth in most cases when combined with other layers.

By using layers of clothing you can more effectively control your temperature, being too hot can be as dangerous as being too cold as you will be tempted to remove a heavy layer of clothing. You can unzip or remove one or more layers if you get hot, you can also zip or put on another layer if you are cold. Air trapped between layers adds to the insulation value of your clothing. Below is an explanation of the layer system.

- Base layer (underwear/thermal underwear/T-shirts)
- Layer 1 (Shirt/Pants)
- Layer 2 (Sweaters)
- Layer 3 (Light/midweight jackets)
- Layer 3.5 (Down vests)
- Layer 4 (Regular winter jackets)
- Layer 5 (Parkas/snow pants/snow suits)

There are several levels of cold: cool, cold, very cold and extreme cold. You should have a layer for each level of cold, the first four (and base) layers when combined should provide you with clothing for extreme cold. We have said that your base layer should consist of silk or synthetic because cotton becomes dangerous to you when wet. Down, wool, silk, polar fleece and other synthetics are the preferred cloth for cold weather gear, cotton blends are better than 100% cotton but still a long way from the others.

Below you will find items for each layer, starting with Layer 5.

Please remember that winter is unforgiving, you must balance cost with performance. When it comes to winter gear low cost usually means poor quality and/or short life. Cabela's has a 100% satisfaction guarantee, few companies offer this level of guarantee, this means that they stand behind the products they sell as well as their name brand.

Parka (Layer 5)

A good down parka is hard to beat. There are many parkas out there, by many manufacturers, as well as surplus military gear. We prefer down for the simple reason that centuries of use has proven it to be a good insulator and lost down feathers can be replaced. A good parka should have slash hand warmer pockets on the chest, at least two bellows outer pockets for gloves and other gear, and one pocket inside for other items. Fur on the hood is optional, but highly suggested as it keeps snow from sliding into the hood opening. The hood should be of the tunnel type, adjustable to properly size it, with a wire in the edge of the hood to allow for making the opening smaller. The parka should be long enough to cover to the top of your knees, have a waist drawstring, and have a two-way zipper that allows you to unzip from the bottom as well as the top, and a button or snap storm flap. Buying a size bigger than you normally wear is fine and will allow for layering in extreme cold.

One of the best, and very reasonably priced, comes from Cabela's. There are better parkas out there, but with prices that go to above \$500, the Cabela's parka is a good blend of price and performance. Below is a picture of the Cabela's parka we recommend. Available in regular length sizes from small to 5XL and tall length in sizes medium to 3XL there is a size to fit almost everyone, prices range from \$180 to \$220 USD. The range of sizes, reasonable price, and quality is why we recommend this parka over others.

Other brands/retailers:

Canada Goose - www.canada-goose.com - Some of the best down parkas available, priced to match.

Woods Canada - www.soodscanada.com - No online store.

Wiggy's - www.wiggys.com - Laminate based, expensive but very good.

S.I.R Mailorder (Canada) - www.sirmailorder.ca - Sells Woods and Canada Goose products.



Snow suits (Layer 5)



Snow Pants (Layers 4 to 5)



Headwear (Layers 3 to 5)

With a large portion of heat lost through your head it is very important to have proper headwear. Below are several styles of headwear that will keep you warm in any situation.

The classic watchmen's cap or toque, available in wool, wool blends and synthetics such as polar fleece.



Below is a polar fleece hat that can be worn four ways to provide the protection from the cold you need.



Below is a classic style northern fur hat with ear flaps.



For extreme cold or high activity levels the two face masks and the head covers below are great. Using the heat of your breath to warm the air coming in it prevents your lungs from freezing. Available in two styles, face mask and head cover/balaclava, and two technologies, these will help keep you warm in the coldest of weather and highest activity levels. The face mask can be worn in combination with a toque/watchmen's cap, balaclava or other head covering to provide total head protection from extreme cold.

Available with
or without
SCENTLOK
ODOR ELIMINATING TECHNOLOGY



- Reduces stiffness and numbness
- Eliminates up to 40% of heat loss
- No condensation or freeze up
- Headcover now offered with Scent-Lok lining



Headcover



Facemask

To round out your headwear you should have a good pair of non-fogging, polarized snow or ski goggles. Snow blindness is a very real threat and polarized goggles will help prevent the glare reflected from snow and ice from causing snow blindness. Also, goggles will protect your eyes from blowing snow and prevent your eyes from drying out due to wind.



Balaclava



Facemask



- Small module in facemask warms the air you breathe and allows you to enjoy winter recreation at its best
- Compact, lightweight and cleans easily
- Stays dry - Moisture does not condense on the fleece
- Tested at -40 F and does not frost

Hands (Layers 3 to 5)

Cold hands in the winter are no fun and can lead to frostbite and the loss of fingers or entire hands. Although there are good gloves out there, a good pair of mittens is far better due to all of the fingers being surrounded with one piece of fabric and insulation. You should have a good pair of wool or fleece gloves or half gloves for when it is not too cold and when you need the added dexterity of gloves, a good pair of wool or fleece mittens for intermediate cold - you can pick a size so that you can wear your gloves or half gloves as a liner. A compromise on half gloves and mittens is the "glomitt" which is a half glove with a fold away mitten pouch.

For extremely cold weather mittens such as these are the best solution, with a gauntlet

grandoe
A GLOVE SPECIALTY



style they will cover the sleeves of your parka, the fur on the back of the hand can be used to wipe snow from your face while the velcro and drawstrings can be used to seal them well to prevent snow from getting in. You may want to get a durable pair of leather gloves or mittens for times when you will be doing hard work such as chopping firewood. You may want to consider a lanyard to attach to the mittens so that you do not have to worry about losing them.

Feet (Layers 3 to 5)



Your feet are very important and are often the coldest part of your body in extreme cold. Like your hands, improper footwear can lead to frostbite and the loss of toes or entire feet. It is of extreme importance to have proper footwear. You should wear liner socks of silk or synthetic that will wick away moisture and then a wool sock for warmth. ALWAYS keep at least one pair of dry socks with you if you are traveling anywhere - clean, dry socks can make a big difference in morale and in the health of your feet.

We suggest two pairs of winter boots, one for temperatures down to around -40 and one for extreme cold. When it comes to boots DO NOT consider cheaply made boots - ALWAYS buy the best boots you can get. Below are good winter boots by Sorel that are good to -40 and then "pacboots" that have ratings from -130 to -150. Remember, when your feet are cold the rest of you will feel cold as well.

For general duty boots, including cool to cold temperatures Danner boots are very good. Soldiers around the world swear by their "Ft. Lewis" boots and consider anything with the Danner name on it to be the best in the world. Danner boots are available in insulated and uninsulated versions. In general we suggest that people stay away from steel toe boots - the steel cap will attract the cold and can cut off your toes in certain situations.



For a larger selection of Danner field boots www.danner.com.

Jacket (Layer 4)

Sometimes called 3 Season or 4 Season jackets these should be good for most winter weather, and good to at least -40 with other layers (3, 2 & 1) worn underneath. Usually these consist of an outer shell that is wind and water proof, which can be worn alone for the wind and water proof properties, and then a liner that can be worn on it's own as well. The jackets can have down or Thinsulate for insulation. In the case of wool jackets the wool provides the water proofing and insulation in a single layer. In either case this is your basic "winter jacket".



Wool

DIG/TALL
3XL



Loden



Charcoal

Down Vests (Layer 3.5)

Down vests can be worn in conjunction with other layers to increase warmth. Worn over a long sleeve shirt or sweater they can greatly improve your comfort. Vests are at their best when you are temperatures between the point of a Light or Midweight jacket and a "winter jacket". Season wise, this would apply to mid-spring and mid-fall.



Midweight Fleece & Wool Jacket (Layer 3)

Light or Midweight jackets should keep you warm to temperatures around 0C/32F. A down vest can be worn for those times when it is too cool for a Light or Midweight jacket and too warm for a "winter jacket". Season wise this would apply to early-spring and late-fall.



Sweater (Layer 2)

Sweaters can be fleece, wool or some other insulating synthetic. In temperatures below 10C/50F or so you should have a sweater with you.



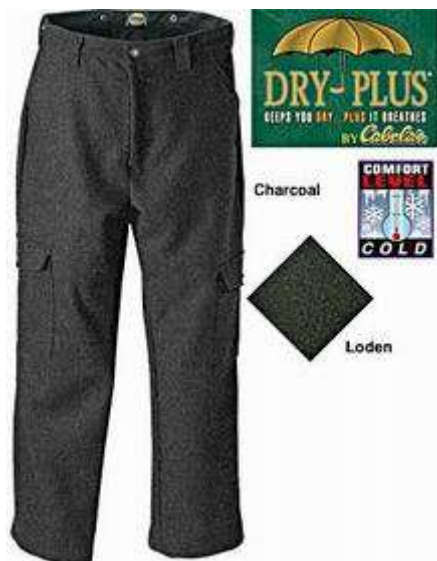
Wool & Fleece Shirts (Layer 1)

A long sleeve wool or fleece shirt should be worn from fall until spring. You can roll up the sleeves and wear a T-shirt underneath with the shirt open, but the extra warmth is well worth the light weight of a long sleeve wool or fleece shirt.



Wool & Fleece Pants And Bibs (Layer 1)

Because wool and fleece will keep you warm when wet they are much preferred to cotton based pants. Regular sythetic pants like polyester and other lightweight synthetics do not have the drawbacks of cotton but they also do not have the insulating benefits of fleece and wool. A good heavy wool or fleece material will keep you warm and dry and will outlast lightweight synthetics.



Thermal Underwear (Base Layer)

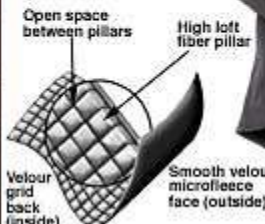
Thermal underwear, NO COTTON, comes in several weights (and insulation values) - silk/tech silk weight, medium, heavy, polar/expedition and then goose down. Each level is designed for a different level of cold. Silk/tech silk is the lightest weight and is for cool days when there is a possibility of sweating, it will wick away the sweat while also providing some insulation, thereby keeping you warmer than without any thermal underwear. Heavier weights will keep you warmer at colder temperatures and will also wick away any sweat. Goose down thermal underwear should be worn with a silk/tech silk weight set to wick away any sweat. If you are going to wear briefs or boxers beneath your thermal underwear these should be of a "technical" or synthetic fabric that is designed to wick sweat away from your skin, the same applies



Polar Weight



Heavy Weight Zip-T



Power Dry now available in Cabela's Exclusive Seclusion 3D Camo



Medium Weight

Tech Silk Weight



Men's Silk/Wool Blend Underwear



Men's Silk Underwear



Mock-T



Boxers



Balaclava



Glove Liner



Sock Liner



Bibs



Zip-Top



Pants



Balaclava



Socks

for T-shirts worn over thermal underwear.



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