

HOW TO

Stay Warm in Winter



Wild mammals have a thick coat of fur to keep them cozy when weather turns wintery. We humans aren't so lucky. Here's how to clobber the cold.

There are two tricks to staying warm when you're playing outside in winter. The first trick is to keep your body fueled up so that it can generate plenty of heat. Before you go outside, eat a healthy meal. While you're out, snack on granola bars or a handful of nuts. And if you get chilly, try sipping some steamy cocoa.

The second trick is to dress in layers. Multiple layers trap heat and help you fine-tune your temperature. For example, if you're dragging a sled up a long, steep hill, you can take off a layer so you don't overheat. When you're ready to whoosh back down, you can put on a layer so you don't get cold.

Just don't overdo the layers. Don't wear so many that you waddle around like a penguin in a parka. If you pick the right clothes, three layers — base layer, insulation, and shell — are all you should need.

HERE'S HOW YOU DO IT

BASE LAYER



When you're outside playing, you sweat. If sweat stays against your skin, you'll soon be shivering. That's why the most important layer is the one you put on first. This layer needs to move, or wick, sweat away from your skin. Some fabrics are better at wicking than others. Look at the tag on your base layer. If the fabric is made of wool, polypropylene, or polyester you're good to go. If it's made of cotton, look for something else. Cotton holds sweat against your skin like a soggy sponge.

INSULATION



Your body is like a furnace. It makes heat to keep you warm, but if you aren't insulated, the heat disappears into the outside air. Like insulation in the walls of your house, a fluffy layer of clothing will trap the heat around your body. A shaggy fleece, wool sweater, or puffy jacket is a perfect insulation layer for your upper body. A stocking hat will trap heat around your head. Mittens or gloves will keep your hands warm. And wool socks will keep your toes toasty.

SHELLS



A nylon or polyester windbreaker and a pair of snow pants will block the wind during dry weather. If there's a chance of rain, sleet, or snow, wear a waterproof jacket and pants. Choose shells that are made of breathable fabrics that allow sweat to escape. Otherwise, you'll feel clammy. Wear boots that keep your feet dry. If the boots are big, wear two pairs of socks. But if the boots are snug, stick with a single pair. Blood doesn't flow well when your feet are cramped.