



How to Layer Outdoor Clothing



With the arrival of the cooler months – here are some tips on how to keep warm at camp.

What is the function of each layer?

- ❖ **Base layer** (underwear layer): wicks sweat off your skin and keeps you comfortable
- ❖ **Mid layer** (insulating layer): retains body heat to keep you warm
- ❖ **Outer layer** (shell layer): shields you from wind and rain
- Even if you don't wear all three layers at the outset or don't think you'll need them, it's a good idea to take all layers on every outing - you can take off layers if things heat up, but you can't put on layers that you didn't bring!
- Simply mix and match.... wear all layers if it's really cold and wet or just the base layer if it's hot and dry.

Base Layer – Moisture Management

- As the next-to-skin layer, a base layer's job is to move perspiration away from your skin, this is called 'wicking'. This keeps your skin dry to avoid chilling down (and you don't feel sweaty). For warmer days this layer may just be a t-shirt!
- ❖ **Synthetic options** (eg polyester) – cheaper option, easier to wash and dry, some have odour control properties added, durable
- ❖ **Natural options** (eg merino wool) – more costly, often warmer, naturally odour resistant, slightly more prone to wear patches
- ❖ **For cold temps** choose a mid-weight option.
- ❖ Go for a '**comfortably snug**' fit – not too loose as to forfeit the wicking efficiency and not too tight so as to avoid rubbing and creasing.



Middle Layer – Insulation

- The insulating layer helps you retain the heat that's radiated by your body. The more efficiently this layer traps that heat, the warmer you'll be.
- ❖ **In general** - thicker (or puffier) equals warmer.
- ❖ **Polyester Fleece** options – available in different weights (thicknesses), well costed, not super wind resistant
- ❖ **Down jackets** – great warmth to weight ratio, compress (squash) well for packing, durable, more expensive, cleaning can require special care
- ❖ **Synthetic jackets** – continue to insulate even when wet, less costly and less warmth than down, and less durable, heavier and bulkier than down – but the standard is getting better and better



Outer Layer – Rain and Wind Protection

- The outer layer protects you from wind and rain (and snow).
- Look for jackets that are seam-sealed, have a good hood, have adjustable cuffs and hood, venting under arms, coated or storm-flapped zippers and are lightweight
- ❖ **Waterproof and breathable** – more expensive, durable, good quality materials, most effective at keeping you dry and not sweaty underneath
- ❖ **Waterproof and non-breathable** – durable, less costly, but if undertaking exercise you will get a bit sweaty underneath.
- ❖ **Soft Shells** – a good outer layer option if a waterproof jacket is not essential or you also have a raincoat. Choose a variety that has a water-resistant material.
- ❖ Remember beanies and gloves too!