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Stay Warm – A Backpacking Skill

By Steven Gillman

Stay warm or die. That's what it comes down to at the extremes. More people die in the wilderness of exposure than from any other cause. Staying warm, of course, also means more comfort, and for backpackers, it can mean going even lighter, without more risk.

Staying warm in the wilderness is about proper gear and good skills. Proper gear means clothing and equipment suited to the environment you're in. This is a subject in itself, worth studying if you spend much time backpacking. With better materials and designs, the newest clothing and equipment saves lives. It is skills, however, that make the biggest difference.

How To Stay Warm – Tips and Skills

- Set up camp in the right places. Hilltops are windy and cold, and cold air also fills valleys at night. Level ground somewhere in between, out of the wind, is best.
- Wear clothes to bed. Shake and fluff them up to make them insulate better. Some recommend against sleeping in clothes, but I've tried it both ways many times, and it's always warmer with clothes on.
- Wear a hat. This may be equal to a pound of insulation in your sleeping bag. A lot of heat is lost through an uncovered head.
- Go to bed dry. Stay up until your clothes have dried, or change into dry clothes. On a warm, dry night, however, you can put damp clothes on your sleeping bag to dry them with body heat. You may need warm, dry clothes the next night (Thinking ahead is a great wilderness skill).
- Breathe into your sleeping bag. Only do this in a dry climate, or if you're sure it's your last night out. You'll get damp, but you should dry quickly from hiking in the morning.
- Take a water-bottle full of hot water to bed with you. This is easier and safer than heating rocks and placing them around you.

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- Make a pine–needle mattress. Dead leaves and dry grass work too. Scatter the leaves in the morning, so they won't smother the plants underneath. I've slept warmly below freezing, with no sleeping bag, in a pile of dry grass collected from a frozen swamp.
- Fill a water bottle with hot water, and take it to bed with you. This is easier and safer than heating rocks and placing them around you.
- Adjust your clothing as you hike. Remove and add clothes as necessary to stay warm without sweating. Sweat can cause you to lose heat rapidly when you stop.
- Stay dry. On a cold day, wet and hot can become hypothermia soon after you stop moving those muscles. On a hot day, however, wear wet clothing to dry it out in preparation for a possibly cold night.
- Conserve your energy. It's tough for your body to keep itself warm with no energy reserves. You may also need that energy to gather firewood or hike to the car to escape a blizzard. Finally, you'll make better decisions if you aren't tired, and you'll remember how to stay warm.

This is a sampling of wilderness skills and knowledge. There are many more things to learn about how to stay warm. In fact, I've left out one of the most important, because it deserves its own article: how to start a fire in any conditions.

Steve Gillman is a long–time advocate of lightweight backpacking. Visit his website for tips, photos, gear recommendations, a free book and a new wilderness survival section:

The Ultralight Backpacking Site

:

<http://www.The-Ultralight-Site.com>

Backpacking Adventure Travel

By John Purdy

If you are looking to take an adventure travel lasting a day or two, or over a long holiday weekend, a backpacking adventure travel may be a perfect solution. This type of adventure travel is usually easier to plan and will give you a nice break away from your everyday routine. Before you begin, you first have to decide how long you plan on being away.

If you plan on being gone for one single day, a daypack would satiate, but if you plan on going on a multi–day adventure travel, you would need to go for backpacking. With both these types, you would have to keep in mind a few more things. For example, the backpack for your backpacking adventure travel should come with sturdy shoulder straps. In addition to that, your backpack should also have

enough padding and curves. This helps to keep your collarbone safe otherwise it would chaff it.

Another thing that must be understood with backpacking is having good zips. The zips should be strong and durable. And to make things easier for you, always try to opt for zips of the larger size. These types are always more reliable. Your backpack should also come with a good waist strap. And why is that essential for you? For the simple reason that it takes much of the weight off your shoulders and as such your shoulder would not get tired easily.

And the last thing that should be kept in mind before choosing your backpacking adventure travel is that the material of the backpack must be of the highest quality. You should not compromise on quality just because of cost. The consequences could be very problematic. Just imagine what could happen if the backpack gave out in the middle of your adventure travel.

So, you have got yourself a decent backpack for your backpacking adventure travel. Now the next thing would surely be getting an idea of the things that you ought to be keeping in your backpack. The very first thing that you should always keep in mind is that never in any case forget to take the maximum possible amount of water with you. You should also not forget to maintain sufficient amount of iodine tablets with you to treat the water you get while on your adventure. It is not possible to carry all the water that you would need during your travel and you are bound to use water from outside, and as such, iodine tablets are a must.

You will also need to transport food with you. If you pack each of your meals separately, you can save a great deal of space and you would be taking just enough food that you will need. In addition, you will also need to take some clothes. If you are planning a multi-day backpacking adventure travel, you have to take enough clothes with you to regular changes. You should also bring a good pair of shoes and do not forget a sleeping back and/or a tent.

Keep in mind that your preparation will greatly depend on the location you choose for your adventure travel, the type of terrain and the weather conditions for that area. Be sure to perform as much research as possible before you leave for your backpacking adventure travel to ensure you will an exciting and memorable experience.

J. Purdy operates

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. For

information and resources on hiking and adventure, be sure to visit his sites today: hiking-vacations.net



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