

NO FREEZING IS ALLOWED

HAVING FUN and ENJOYING, SAFE and WARM WINTER HIKING & ACTIVITIES

BY: Rob Golda

I have always been a stickler for being safe while still having fun outdoors. I really believe you can do both. Just dress right, watch a few important signs and abide by some rules of thumb, and go ahead and try any Winter activity you desire.

Being dressed for Winter outdoor activities is number one in Winter safety and fun. Another big thing is keeping yourself hydrated. Just because it is not 90 degrees outside, doesn't mean we do not sweat or our bodies don't need the water it

normally does. Outdoor Winter activities can require a lot of water to help keep our bodies going. With these two things in mind, we can ward off the big threat outdoors in the Wintertime, Hypothermia. Something that can come on faster than you think, and something that is deadly if not dealt with in a hurry. Take a look at the list below for a few recommendations on how to remain comfortable, hydrated and safe while outdoors enjoying Winter activities.

BRING ALONG AN EXTRA PAIR OF GLOVES: Once your gloves have gotten wet and hands start to get cold, you have taken the first step toward Hypothermia. The 3 big things to keep warm and dry on a Winter activity are your hands, Feet and Head. **Use the Cloths Layering System**

DO NOT FORGET THAT PLASTIC GARBAGE BAG: This simple Garbage bag can give you a nice dry and slightly insulated place to sit down on the wet snow or ground. Makes all the difference in the world. And of course it doubles as a quick rain coat to protect your body and spine from getting wet. And it folds nicely into your back pocket. It can also be used for an assisted dry shelter and a signaling device. Many uses for such a simple item that folds and fits easily into almost any pocket.

A NICE BEANIE STYLE HAT (Bring 2 of them): Another easily carried, lightweight item that can make all the difference in the world on getting rid of that slight chill that can turn into a very bothersome cold body and possible Hypothermia, is a Hat. You don't need a super thick hat, something with a little more open, breathable weave to it is just fine. It will allow your head to breath and still not over heat.

THICKER STYLE SOCKS: Just that little bit of thicker socks will make a big difference on whether you are just comfortable, slightly chilled or feeling great. A re-enforced toes and heal style sock is even better. And the ultimate is to have a pair of Polypropylene under sock on first. Then layer your thicker reinforced sock over that. This is a very important thing to look after when heading outdoors for Winter activities. Wet cold feet means cold body which is a very fast road to Hypothermia.

WATER AND HYDRATION: Many people forget that they need just as much water intake in the Winter season as in the Summer, if you are going to be able to fight off the colder temperatures.

Now I know I have sounded a little like a Hypothermia nut, but even the start of Hypothermia can be damaging to you, and will definitely put a damper on your outdoor fun.

A few other tips for outdoor Winter activities are these: Blue jeans are the worse thing you can wear outdoors while participating in Winter activities. They absorb moisture, are a terrible insulator and your movement is greatly reduced as the jeans get colder and stiffer.

A hightop pair of Boots are a good idea for Winter sports because there is a little better chance that the snow or wet will not get into the inside of your boot, and the tighter fit around the ankle assists at sealing your feet into the boot.

If there was any one thing I had to get for Winter activities, it would be a set of Polypropylene underwear. There is nothing better

