

WINTER BASICS

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"BE PREPARED and ENJOY IT MORE"

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No matter what you may have in mind for outdoor fun, there are some things that will help make that activity, more enjoyable. Some of the simple items and suggestions here, can take a possible bad situation and change the outcome, or add convenience to your winter activities. What you will find on these 2 pages have been collected from Hiking Michigan hikers and years of experience in the winters of Michigan. We hope this gathering of information will assist you in having an even better time outdoors.

SOME ESSENTIAL ITEMS: A few things that will take many of the possible problems out of any outdoor activity and in many cases and to the enjoyment of the experience.

1. A Garbage bag for each person

This is something that can be easily put into every one's back pocket. It serves so many purposes. It acts as a dry seat in wet grass or on a damp picnic table. It works as a quick raincoat, keeping your main body core dry. And it works great in collecting trash along the trails or at your picnic site at the end of the day.



2. Bottled Water

No matter what the season, being hydrated is number one. It helps keep the body regulated in temperature, keeps your strength up and stops those little ones from becoming crabby, needlessly. I cannot say enough about making sure everyone drinks a lot of water when outdoors. Before and during your activities. The possible inconvenience of bathroom visits far outweigh the benefits of keeping hydrated.



3. A Plastic Whistle

For emergencies or locating members of a winter outing, a simple whistle is an outdoor tool that should be a part of your every season equipment. Lightweight and easily stashed in many places, it is invaluable.



4. FIRE

Whether it is water-proof matches or the BIC lighter, FIRE is something you should have when heading outdoors for winter activities. It is a small item that can save your life should something unforeseen take place.



5. Compass

This is another easily stashed item that is invaluable outdoors. A compass is a great outdoor tool, especially in the winter months, when the terrain is covered in snow and direction is not always as apparent as it can be in the warmer months of the year. GPS units also serve compass and many other functions.



HOW TO DRESS & WHAT TO WEAR: A few things that will take many of the possible problems out of any outdoor activity and in many cases and to the enjoyment of the experience.

1. POLYPROPYLENE & Under Layer

The best system for winter clothing is the "Layering System". A thin body layer of Polypropylene or other synthetic type of material, (Silk is good as well) will wick away the moisture and act as a second skin of insulation. Building in layers from this first under-layer of a synthetic material is the best way to go for winter activities.

2. Footwear and Socks

Just as important as the hat on your head, is the warmth and dryness of your feet. A Polypropylene under-sock, with a nice wool outer sock is a great way to keep dry and warm feet during winter activities. It is worth the investment in a GORTEX lined, insulated boot if your winter activities is something you regularly participate in. "Gaitors" over your shins and boot-tops will also enhance your foot wear and add to the warmth of your feet.

3. Hat & Gloves

We lose most of the heat from our bodies, out the top of our heads. Again, warmth is one thing, but staying dry is part of the equation as well. The right kind of winter hat will allow both. Controlling the heat loss and still staying dry from sweat is very important. This is also true for our hands. One of the best glove set-ups are a two system type. A GORTEX or Polypropylene, thin inner glove, and a thicker insulated outer glove. For the most part, just the thinner inner gloves can be worn. As cold increases, the outer gloves can be put on. Either pair of gloves when not in use, can be stowed in one of your coat pockets.



Being outdoors in the winter, properly dressed is a great experience. The Woods hold many new surprises in the winter months. Being prepared will help you enjoy those experiences. A couple extra items to add to your basic arsenal of proper dress and foot wear is a pair of "Yak-Trax". The PRO models have velcro across the top of the boot to stop the wire-wrapped rubber from slipping off your boots. These will give you traction in almost any winter conditions, even on ice, or while shoveling snow from the driveway.



Another important and very useful add-on to your winter equipment is a pair of "Gators". These insulate your shins & lower legs and stop snow from coming into the tops of your boots. They come in two sizes. The shorter versions will work in most settings here in S.E. MI. The taller, knee-high Gators are good for Snow shoeing and winter bushwhacking, where the snow can get pretty deep. Some Gators are insulated and others are not, and very lightweight. Both versions work as a waterproofing barrier for your lower legs and boot tops. Costs vary in height, insulation and other features that will assist you depending on how deep of snow you will be using the Gators in.

Both the Gators and a pair of Yak-Trax are two invaluable items for your best winter outdoor activities. Inexpensive for what you will receive in dry warmth, and traction even on ice. Properly treated, both items are a one-time purchase and should last indefinitely.



POLYPROPYLENE Under Layer



FLEECE VEST



WING & WATER Resistant COAT



WING & WATER Resistant HAT



NYLON Pants



POLY Gloves



WOOL Socks



GORETEX Insulated Boots



Dressing in Layers is the best form of winter dress. Starting those layers with Polypropylene or another synthetic insulator is the perfect base for winter warmth. The next layer should be a loose fitting pair of nylon style pants. NO JEANS. The cotton gets wet easily and will keep absorbing moisture. A Fleece vest or wool blend shirt is a good second layer over the Polys. Top this off with a wind breaking over-coat. It can be insulated as well, as long as it breathes and can be zippered under the arms and other areas to ventilate the body and stop perspiration moisture from accumulating. A Poly under glove and an insulated over glove, along with a wind and water resistant hat with ear flaps will round out your winter dress. Do not skimp on foot wear!

POLYPROPYLENE Socks

