

Clothing Rules for Snow Camping

by. M. Python* (aficionados may recognize a pattern here)

Rule #1: NO COTTON! Wet cotton is a heat sink. Most of the clothes you own are cotton, so this can be a challenge. This prohibition includes socks, underwear, and everything else with the possible exception of bandanas for blowing your nose. Anyone found to be in possession of jeans of any color at the campsite will be sent home. You'd be surprised or appalled at how many nice fluffy allegedly warm cotton sweaters there are in the world. Wool and polypropylene are the best, since they continue to insulate even when wet.

Rule #2: If your feet are cold (and they will be), put on a hat. Your body will send warm blood to your brain at the expense of your extremities, and if your head is uncovered, your fingers and toes will soon feel cold. Keep in mind that baseball caps are usually made from...

Rule #3: NO COTTON!

Rule #4: Dress in layers. The hardest part is finding pants. New Scout moms, go buy a nice set of fleece/pile jacket and pants that fit you, then loan them to your son for the weekend. A slight reversal of this advice also works for long polypro underwear. Failing this, look for wool pants at Goodwill. Top layer can be standard ski apparel. Ski vests are also good to bring. One of the best stores in San Jose for this sort of thing is unfortunately named Mel...

Rule #5: NO COTTON!

Rule #6: Bring as many pairs of warm gloves as you can get; you'll soak them all. Pack each pair in a sealable baggie. When one gets soaked, put them back in the baggie and get a dry pair. Continue until snow cave is complete or you run out of gloves.

Rule #7: NO COTTON!

Rule #8: Wear snow boots with 2-3 pairs of socks, the innermost being polypro liners. Sorel boots are the best, triple stitched with felt liners at the very least, they can be rented. Gaiters are also recommended, and can also be rented.

Rule #9: NO COTTON!

*Bill Gascoyne, actually with a nod to Monty Python's Bruce sketch.