

Staying Warm in the Winter When the Power is Out

It is not only important to **stay warm** when the outside temperature is cold, but also to know **how**. If electrical power and/or natural gas is not available here are some suggestions:

Propane heater – Camp stove, etc.

An excellent *temporary* source of heat. However, **BE CAREFUL when using it in a confined space because it can consume all the oxygen. When in use, provide for a source of outside air.** Have a full propane bottle and a lighter handy. Also, think of the possibility of putting out a fire if it is knocked over.

Sleeping bag

Most of us think that a sleeping bag warms us up. That is not exactly the case. In fact, when we get into a cold sleeping bag part of our body heat is expended warming up the bag. If we are chilled and have cold feet when we get in, it is going to take time, sometimes, a long time too warm that bag up. The purpose of a sleeping bag is to retain body heat. If too many clothes are worn to bed, body heat is insulated from the bag, and it is less efficient. It is more efficient to add extra layers (blankets, etc.) on top of the bag rather than to wear extra clothes. It is also much more comfortable for sleeping.

Tip:

Insert something that is warm/hot into the foot area of a sleeping bag before entry. For example: Add some hot water to a bottle. Any bottle with a tight, no leak lid. A bottle can be metal, glass, or plastic as long as it doesn't leak or break. In an outdoors setting heating a rock can also work, though with some disadvantages – dirt on the rock or the rock is too hot.

Tip:

A lot of heat is lost when your head protrudes out of the sleeping bag. A 'painter's sock' (used to protect the wearers head from paint splatter) is a great way to slow down heat loss from the head, it keeps the ears warm and stays in place as we move while sleeping.

Sleeping pad

When we think of a sleeping pad, we almost always think of comfort when laying on a hard surface, and this is true. However, a sleeping pad also provides insulation from the cold floor.

Blankets, quilts, etc.

Blankets are designed more for comfort, where sleeping bags are designed more for efficiency.

Get comfy on the couch and put on several blankets to keep warm. Wool blankets provide the most warmth.

Reflective blanket

Space-aged technology created the reflective blanket. In an attempt to sell these, manufactures and marketers have traditionally made them cheap and flimsy, and often as a one-time use item. This approach has helped sales, but these items are now disregarded by many as a poor product and a poor purchase. It is virtually impossible to get one back into its original packaging.

However, good-quality reflective blankets are available (cost more) and are very effective in capturing body heat, but not that good at retaining body heat because of the lack of wall-thickness – insulation.

Tip:

Be careful when laying a reflective blanket over a sleeping bag. Because reflective blankets do not breathe well, or at all, they tend to trap condensation inside the sleeping bag that is created by the person inside the bag. You can wake up wet and cold.

Drink Warm Liquids

Hot chocolate, soup, and herbal tea will keep your body warm from the inside out. Use your candle or camp stove to heat the liquid. Whenever you feel a chill try drinking some hot liquid. Avoid drinking cold water or other cold drinks. Keep warm liquids in a thermos to retain warmth. Holding onto the container will also warm the hands.

Get Some Exercise

Five minutes of jumping jacks or burpees will warm you up really fast. If you have kids, play a game of Simon Says. Not only will this warm up everyone, but it will also boost morale.

Layer Your Clothing

Wear thermal underwear, a couple pairs of socks, several shirts, and a hat that covers your ears. This will make it harder for heat to escape and keep you much warmer. You can also wear a coat and gloves inside if needed.

One-time Use Hand Warmers

Put the warmers in your gloves and socks to help keep your hands and feet warm. You will need to replace the warming packs every couple of hours.

Rechargeable Hand Warmers

Somewhat new to the market are rechargeable hand warmers. Use them the same way that the one-time use warmers are used.

Huddle in One Small Room

Pick a small bedroom (preferably one with as few windows as possible) and have your whole family gather there. Close the door and cover the vents to trap the body heat generated by everyone. If possible, pick a room on the south side of the house so the sun's rays can warm the room naturally. Also, if you're dealing with a wind coming out of the north, you don't want to be on that side of the house.

Suggestions for the House or Dwelling

Limit as Much as Possible the Number of Times You Exit Your Heated Room or House.

Every time you exit hot air escapes and cold air pours in.

Close Rooms You Won't Be Using

Close the doors of every room you don't have to get to. The more sealed up your house is, the less cold will be able to get in.

Use Duct Tape and Plastic to Cover Windows

If you don't have a roll of plastic, you can use garbage bags. Better yet, use bubble wrap if you have it. The extra insulation will stop drafts from seeping around the smallest cracks in the sill and keep the cold glass from chilling the room.

Close All the Blinds and Curtains at Night

Once you've covered the windows with plastic, don't forget the curtains. If there's a window without curtains, use a heavy blanket instead. A few nails in the corners of the blankets won't hurt them. Doing this will block drafts as well as stop the cold air from seeping in through the glass. As long as the sun is shining, you can uncover the windows during the day to let warm sunlight in.

Use Towels to Block Drafts

Roll up towels and place them under doors to block cold drafts from coming in. Put them on window sills as well. You can use pillows, blankets, or even old shirts. Put them anywhere a draft might sneak in.

Put Your Tent Up Indoors

The small, enclosed space will trap in body heat. If your tent is sturdy enough, add a blanket over the top to help trap the heat inside.