

**S****N****O****W**

**Problem?  
No Problem:**

**Your Guide to Dressing For The Cold  
Take a look at these key items you need  
in your wardrobe for snowy days.**



Created by



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# INTRODUCTION

If you're a fan of sunnier climates, you might be a little lost when it comes time to pack for a vacation to a snowy destination. Although it's wonderful to think about long, bright days spent on the ski slopes, or snowshoeing through sparkling winter terrain, there's something more important you need to consider: making sure you're prepared in terms of clothing. The same goes for native cold-experts who experience a blast of wintry weather in their own city and are not ready for long treks outdoors. If you're not equipped with the right gear, the ensuing cold might make you more than just a little uncomfortable – you could end up with varying degrees of frostbite, or in some severe cases, hypothermia. But these scenarios are easy to avoid – all it takes is a few tips and a little know-how, and you'll be safe and snug in your winter clothing, whether you're on snowy home turf or vacationing on the slopes.

***In this e-book, we'll take a look at why it's important to dress properly for the snow, and we'll go over the three necessary layers to wear in cold, winter weather.***



# CHAPTER 1

## The Importance of Staying Warm



It might seem like common knowledge to bundle up when you go outside into the cold, but there are still a lot of people who would rather choose fashion over function. If you live in a part of the world that has traditionally cold, snowy winters, it can be strangely common to see both men and women underdressed for the weather with thin jackets, exposed legs, and no gloves or hats. This isn't such a problem if there's warmth and shelter nearby, but if you're outside in the cold for an extended period of time without the proper wardrobe, you could be in trouble.

When the human body is exposed to the cold for too long, it has difficulty producing enough heat to keep everything warm – and the extremities are an easy target, especially fingers, toes, ears, cheeks, and the tip of the nose. If these areas become chilled for too long, they begin to lose feeling, and eventually the skin loses color as it succumbs to the cold. Although the numbed areas affected by frostbite can be revived with warm water or body heat, in severe cases, the area permanently loses feeling and may need amputation.



Another serious cold-weather threat is hypothermia. The CDC (centers for disease control and prevention) explains hypothermia like this: “...body temperature that is too low affects the brain, making the victim unable to think clearly or move well. This makes hypothermia particularly dangerous because a person may not know it is happening and won't be able to do anything about it.” When hypothermia reaches extreme levels, a person can become so disorientated that they believe they are overheating, and so they remove their layers of clothing and succumb to the cold.



Hypothermia can be fatal, but, as with frostbite, individuals can safely recover from the chill with proper medical care. (The CDC also notes that even if it looks as though someone with hypothermia has stopped breathing, they can actually be successfully resuscitated in some cases.)



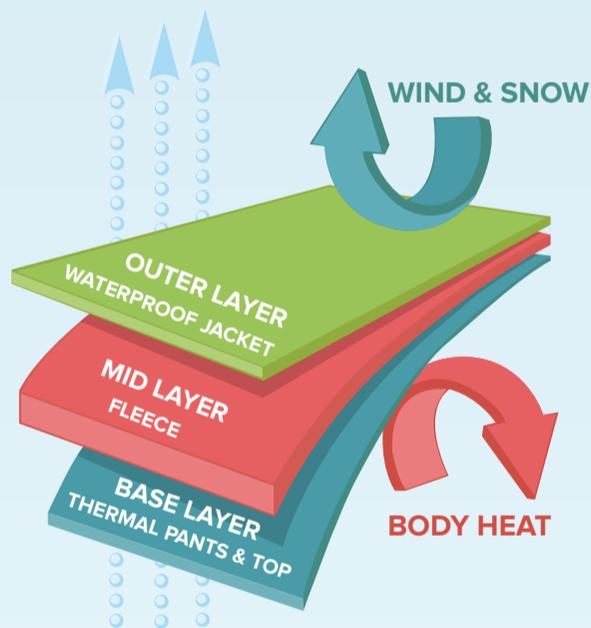
After reading the above, you may be convinced that you should never leave your house when it's too cold outside. While it's true that you should always pay attention to meteorologists when they announce extreme cold alerts, a bit of snow and cold shouldn't be enough to dissuade you from exploring the wintery outdoors – especially if you have the right winter wardrobe. Making sure your closet is stocked with proper clothing for snowy weather is essential, whether you live in a region that's hit by traditional winters or you're simply vacationing in a cold region. Fortunately, there are more options than ever before when it comes to clothing choice; unfortunately, the concept of layering – and what fabrics are best for which layer – can be slightly confusing.

***Let's take a look at how to build the ultimate outfit to combat snowy weather – and stay out of the reach of hypothermia and frostbite's icy fingers.***

# CHAPTER 2

## The Base Layer

The biggest word that you'll hear when it comes to winter clothing is thermal. When it comes to protecting your body from the cold, you're going to want insulating fabrics that provide a thermal barrier of trapped heat between the outside air and your skin. And when you're looking at a base layer – the clothing you wear right against your skin – you're also going to want something that can wick moisture away, since clothing that's wet from sweat can easily cause frostbite and hypothermia.



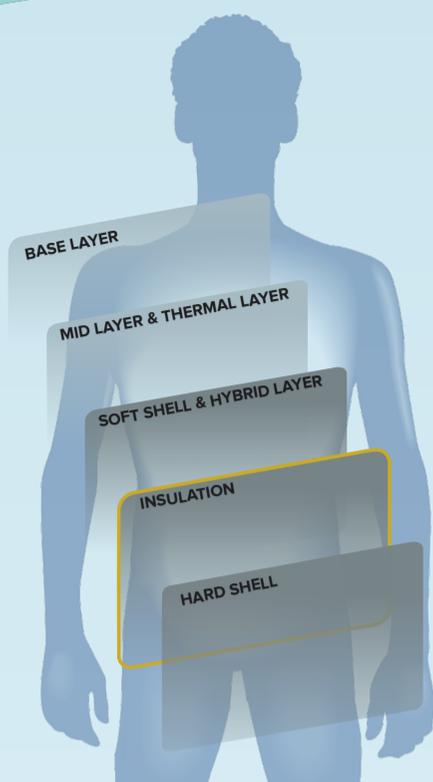
Wool is one of the top fabrics that you should wear as a base layer, as it allows sweat to move through the fabric and dissipate without soaking your clothing. Merino wool in particular is good to look for, as well as synthetic fabrics created especially for cold-weather hiking – typically offered by outdoor equipment companies. An article by REI recommends that the base layer be made up of long underwear or thermal

underwear that will help provide warmth while allowing your sweat to evaporate – helping keep your clothes dry under your insulating layer.

Another vital part of the base layer for cold-weather clothing is a good pair of socks. Feet that are chilled, wet, or both are susceptible to frostbite, so it's necessary that you wear good liner socks to help your feet stay dry, even if you're sweating. (Plus it's not fun having wet, cold feet when you're outside trying to have fun in the snow!) Liner socks are also thin enough that you can pair them with a thicker outer layer for extra warmth! If your feet are well protected under your boots – more on that in a few chapters – then you'll be comfortable for hours of winter activities.

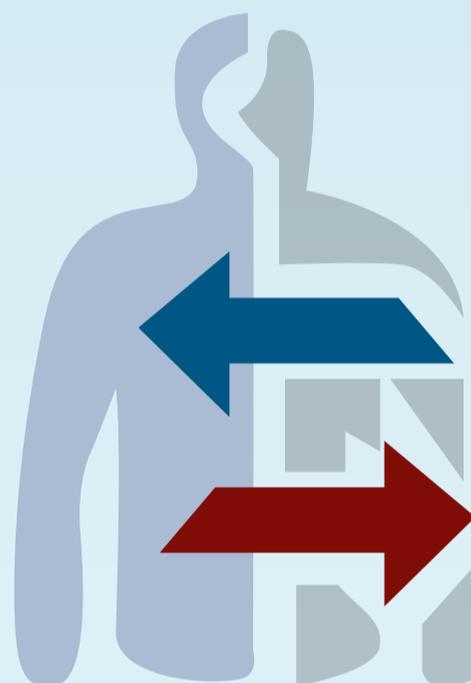
## CHAPTER 3

# The Insulating Layer



Now that you've got some good wool clothing against your skin, it's time to put on the insulating layer. While the base layer is aimed at keeping you dry, the insulating layer helps your body retain its heat. If it's very cold outside and you need extra warmth, you're going to want to use this secondary layer to the fullest.

Although wool is also a good bet for secondary-layer fabric, fleece should be one of your top choices. "They're lightweight, breathable and insulate even when wet," notes the article by REI. "They also dry faster and have a higher warmth-to-weight ratio than even wool." (The article goes on to mention the main drawback of fleece, which is that wind permeates it easier than it does wool, so you're best off with fleece overtop of a wool base layer.) A long-sleeved fleece shirt, light jacket, or fleece vest can all be useful when it comes to helping keep body heat where it belongs.



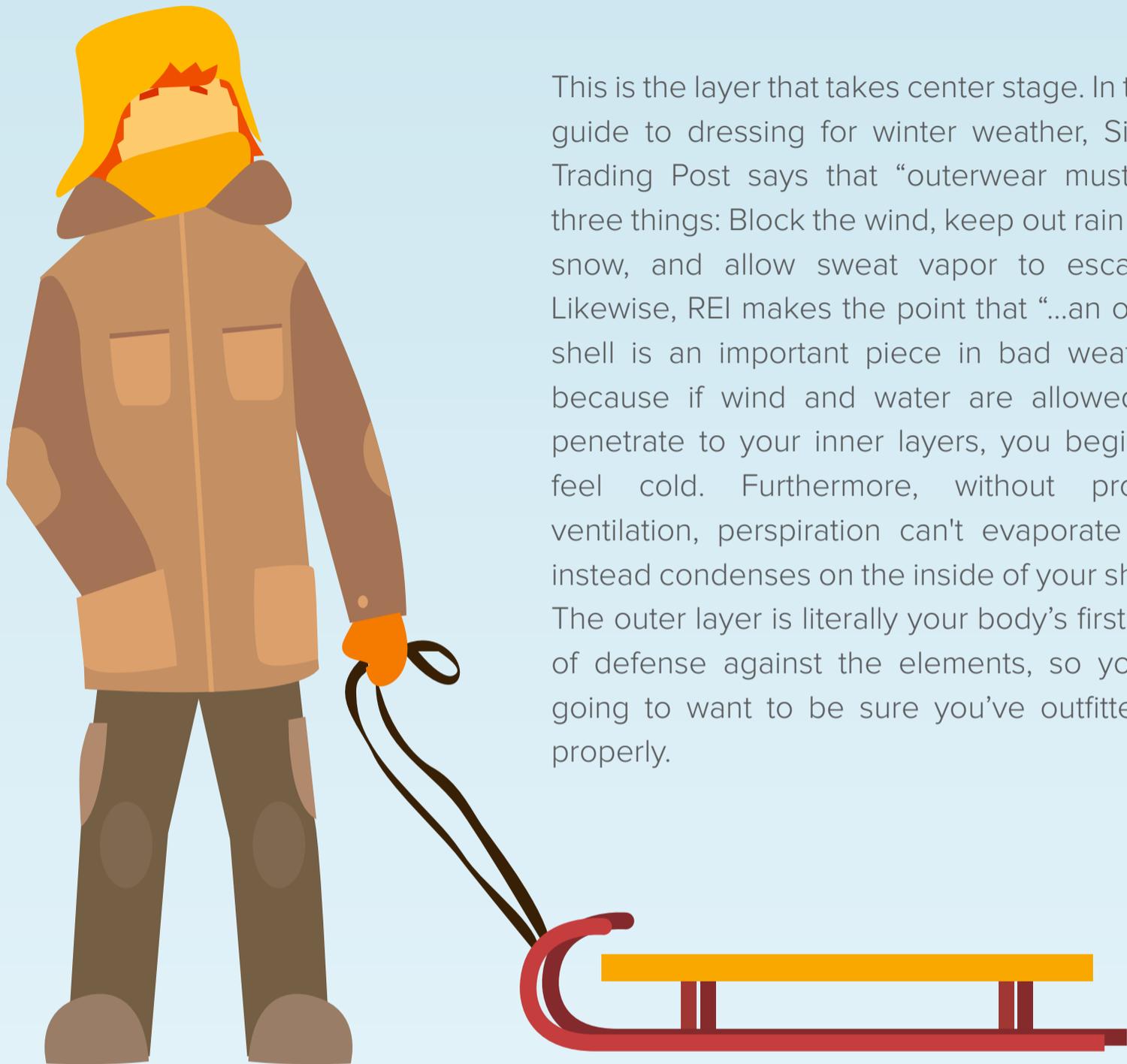
As for the bottom half, your long underwear should sit comfortably underneath pants with a thermal fleece lining. Wearing a long coat can help keep the lower body warm, but it's still a wise idea to wear both a base layer and an insulating layer on your legs. (Be sure to tuck these into your boots as well – it will keep the chilly winds from gusting up underneath your clothes!)

If the weather conditions are extremely cold, you may want to look at incorporating a second pair of socks in your insulating layer. Choosing socks that are thermal can protect your toes and also help your entire body retain heat. Make sure that wearing an extra layer of socks doesn't cause discomfort when it comes time to strap on your winter boots, and you're good to embark upon the third and final layer of protective clothing.



# CHAPTER 4

## The Outer Layer



This is the layer that takes center stage. In their guide to dressing for winter weather, Sierra Trading Post says that “outerwear must do three things: Block the wind, keep out rain and snow, and allow sweat vapor to escape.” Likewise, REI makes the point that “...an outer shell is an important piece in bad weather, because if wind and water are allowed to penetrate to your inner layers, you begin to feel cold. Furthermore, without proper ventilation, perspiration can't evaporate but instead condenses on the inside of your shell.” The outer layer is literally your body's first line of defense against the elements, so you're going to want to be sure you've outfitted it properly.

As this is the outermost layer of clothing, the winter coat is one of the most important aspects of your snow-ready outfit. Although shells come in a variety of types and weights – mostly depending on climate conditions, the need for waterproofing, and breathability – when it comes to snowy weather, you're going to want to look for an insulated shell. That means you'll want to pick a winter coat that has a built-in fleece layer, or a layer of goose down, to keep your body warm. Another thing to look for in a winter coat is at least some waterproofing to the shell; you wouldn't want to end up with a coat that's been soaked by the cold, chilling you to the bone.



Also a part of the outer layer is your choice in footwear. If wool and thermal socks are best at keeping your feet warm and dry, then think of proper winter boots as the shell layer for your feet. In order to keep snow and slush out of your boots, aim to wear a pair that reach ankle height, and check to see how well insulated they are. Underneath the waterproof outer shell, you'll want to see a fleece or wool-lined interior – sometimes in the form of an internal boot liner. If this is the case, WikiHow adds that you may want to look for a second removable liner for your boots – that way, if the inside of your boots happen to get wet, you can simply swap out the wet liner for the new and dry one (the shell of the boot will dry more quickly).



Lastly, you shouldn't dismiss the various accessories you can add to your outer layer to make sure your skin is protected from the elements. You may have been told (likely by your parents) that you need to wear a hat to keep your body heat from escaping; although that's been proven to be a myth, it's still worthwhile to have something covering your head, whether it be a hood or a beanie. A wool scarf will help keep moisture away from your neck while protecting your skin, and a quality pair of gloves – preferably made out of wind-resistant synthetics – will help prevent your digits from getting frostbite. Pair those items with some heavy-duty wool socks, and you'll be entirely prepared for your winter adventure!

As with any part of your winter-outfit layering, make sure that your movements aren't impeded by your outer layer or that you're not uncomfortable. It's definitely possible to be wearing winter clothing that's too bulky, which is why layering is so important – because you can take a heavy outer coat off to simply go with a fleece jacket underneath, for example.

# CONCLUSION

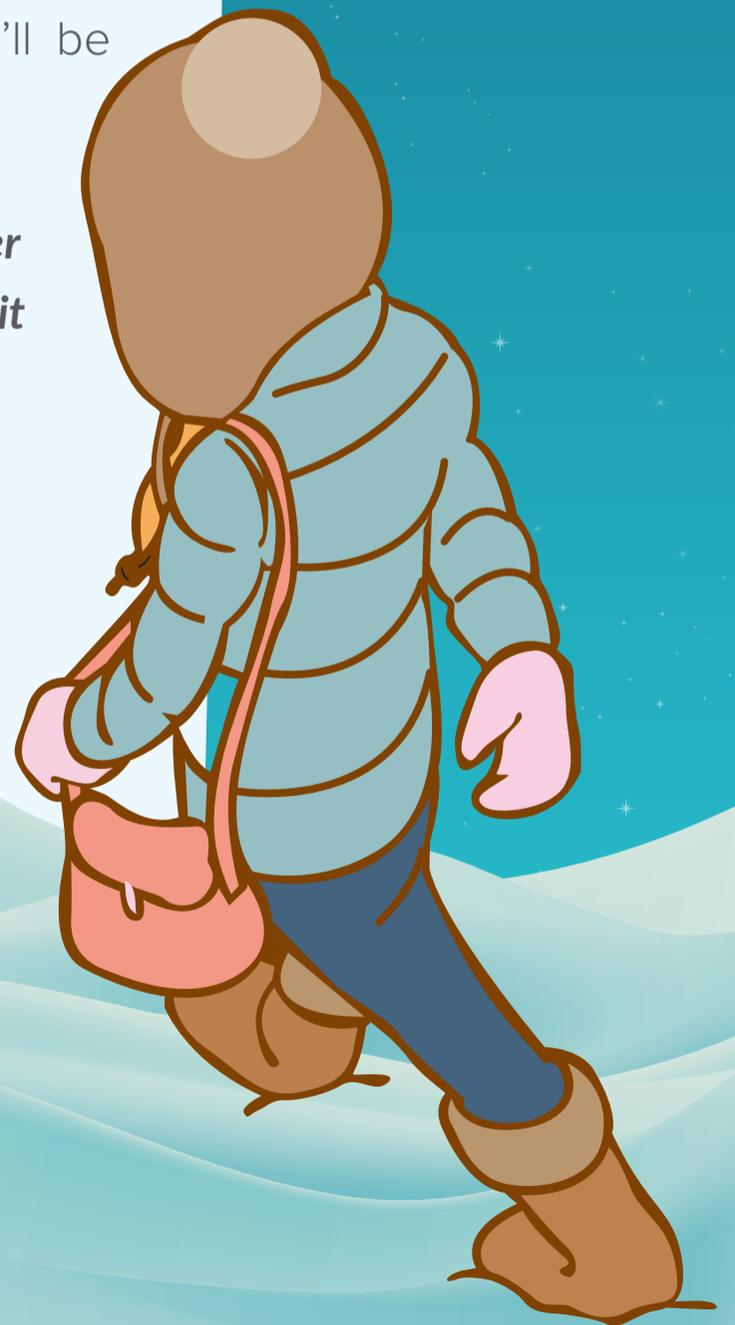
Even if, as the song goes, the weather outside is frightful, cold temperatures shouldn't be enough to keep you from enjoying the brisk air and sparkling snow that awaits. And making sure that you're properly dressed for the snow serves a double purpose: it both prevents potentially dangerous health hazards like frostbite and hypothermia, and it allows you to stay outside and have fun in the snow even longer. So suit up and get ready for any activity the snow may throw at you – from socks to long underwear to a fleece-lined coat, you'll be layered up to last.

*For more on outfitting yourself for winter weather or whatever the elements may throw at you – visit*



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**Resources:**

<http://emergency.cdc.gov/disasters/winter/faq.asp>  
<http://www.rei.com/learn/expert-advice/layering-basics.html>  
<http://www.wikihow.com/Pick-the-Perfect-Pair-of-Snow-Boots>  
<http://www.sierratradingpost.com/lp2/head-to-toe-winter-dressing-guide/>