



I don't know about you ladies, but for me, the thought of camping in winter sends shivers up my spine. Brrrrr!

'It's too cold and wet to go camping', 'Let's wait 'til it's warmer', or 'Let's go to Thailand instead'...

As women, we feel the cold, don't we? AND we like to tell you about it! Or if you're not one for verbal complaints, I'm sure you've placed your cold hands or feet on a warmer companion and got told off in return!

Yep, we're different - we feel the cold.

There is, in fact, a biological reason for women having a different 'thermo control' to men, resulting in women feeling the cold substantially more when the temperature drops.

Put simply, compared to men, our fat layer is more evenly distributed. This means when it's cold, the female body is more equipped to draw blood back to our core organs to keep them warm and working. Therefore, women are better adapted to survive the cold because we protect our major organs effectively.

However, the downside of this is that the tiny temperature sensors on our skin make us **feel** cold.

Winter warmth out bush

So, since winter is well and truly upon us, here are 8 handy tips for keeping the women in your life warm, especially if you're camping or outdoors for long periods of time.

1. Clothing

Ok, the first one is obvious, but your clothing and how you wear it impacts greatly on how well you retain your body heat. Reducing the amount of skin exposed to the elements, with gloves, beanies, scarves or neck warmers and socks is the key. Your head loses the most heat so a dense beanie that also covers your ears is ideal. Also, thermal insulation of your body is achieved by wearing multiple layers of clothing. Air is trapped between the layers of material and this keeps you much warmer than one thick layer of clothing.

2. Fire!

A campfire warms your body and your soul. If you have plenty of dense, dry firewood and the space to set it up, create a decent campfire that throws out welcome, radiant heat. Please be safe. We're not talking about raging bushfires here. In winter, it's the hot radiating coals of your campfire that'll warm up cold bodies, not the short-lived flames.



3. Mmm... Food

Eat regularly and consume a warm energy-rich dinner. Something with carbohydrates and/or starch. Meat and veggie stews with potatoes, casseroles and curries are very warming and tasty meals. Yum!

4. Limit fluids - some more than others

Try to limit how much alcohol and caffeine you consume. A nip of scotch may give you a warming feeling before you go to bed, but both alcohol and caffeine increase the blood flow to your skin, therefore increasing your heat loss. Also, by lowering your fluid intake, you won't need to get up during the night to brave the cold and empty your bladder.

5. Be Warm, Stay Warm

Before you go to bed, make sure your body is warm. Stand near the fire or do some quick vigorous exercise to get your blood moving, then get in your sleeping bag. Because sleeping bags are insulators (like a thermos flask), if you go to bed cold, the sleeping bag will keep you cold. Funny that.



6. Close up your tent

Retain body heat in your tent by making sure all the tent windows and doors are properly sealed before you go to sleep. I know this is an obvious one, but I've known several people who 'froze' during the night only to discover the tent door wasn't zipped up completely. It makes a huge difference!

7. Insulate Yourself

Why not put a few layers between you and the ground, to reduce the cold that originates from the ground as you sleep? For example, a layer of newspaper, a tarp, a foam mattress, a blanket and sleeping bag underneath your body will be much warmer than a mattress and sleeping bag alone. I've heard that you're more likely to be warm with layers below you, rather than piling everything on top of your body.



8. Cover all your extremities

Wear warm clothes or pyjamas to sleep in and wear socks and cover your head with a snug beanie if you're especially prone to feeling cold. Another trick for staying warm while you sleep is to keep your nose covered – not so you struggle to breathe, but so you create an enclosed space in which you can breathe warmer air. This'll really help you keep warm and allow you to fall asleep quickly and easily.



As humans, we weren't meant to live in the cold

So, what else do you do to stave off the cold when you're camping with your family and friends during winter?

What camping adaptations have you made to perfect your winter camping or caravanning adventures? And for those of you from warmer climes, how have you coped when you've roughed it in colder than normal conditions?

How's this? If you want to know exactly how cold it is, what the wind is doing and how much rain has fallen while you're out 'on the road', check out these great electronic weather stations for your vehicle or caravan. Or take a look at this fantastic range of sleeping bags specially designed for general camping and this range of below 0° sleepings bags for a hiking and travelling.