



Is your sleeping bag struggling to keep you warm in the winter months? Do you remember it being warmer – does it seem to have lost its warmth over the years? Or maybe you have a sleeping bag that's better suited to the summer months and you're about to head out in winter and don't want to buy another sleeping bag? If this sounds like you, then read on for our 5 toasty tips for making your sleeping bag warmer.



Brrrr, winter camping can get positively arctic if your sleeping bag isn't warm enough! Image: Sea to Summit.

Here are a few tips on how to get more warmth out of your sleeping bag:

1. Wash your old sleeping bag

If your sleeping bag is on the 'well used' side and doesn't seem to be as warm as it once was, you may need to give it a good wash. Over time the oils from your skin, together with moisture caught in the filling, can cause the stuffing to clump together which prevents it from 'fluffing up'.

The filling in the sleeping bag needs to expand and puff up filling itself with air which will trap the warmth produced by the person inside. By washing your old sleeping bag, the clean filling will fluff up when used. This traps more warm air and increases the barrier between the person inside and the cold air outside.



How to wash your sleeping bag:

1. Put your sleeping bag in a pillowcase to protect the thin outer material from tearing.
2. Using a front loader, wash your sleeping bag on a warm, gentle setting. (Remember to use [Nikwax Down Wash](#) if you have a down sleeping bag.)
3. Dry your sleeping bag in a large tumble dryer on its lowest setting. Place a few tennis balls inside the dryer as these will smash into the sleeping bag which will break up the filling and fluff it up again.
4. If you don't have access to a dryer, you can dry the sleeping bag on the clothesline in the sun. But every half an hour or so, beat it with a tennis racket to break up the filling.

2. Add a thermal liner

If your sleeping bag isn't rated low enough for the conditions you're using it in, or if you've discovered you're a cooler sleeper, consider adding a [silk](#), [cotton](#), or [fleece liner](#) rather than purchasing another sleeping bag.



In an ideal world, you would have a sleeping bag for every season. But in reality, you can make one sleeping bag a lot more versatile with a few of these hacks.

There are many different liners on the market, with our favourite being the [cotton](#) and [silk](#)



versions produced by Sea to Summit. A thermal liner is made of the same material as thermal underwear and is specifically designed and rated to boost the warmth of your sleeping bag.

By adding a liner to your bag, not only will you have a great combination for winter, but you can still use the sleeping bag on its own in average conditions, and then just the liner on its own when it's really hot! A removable liner also keeps your sleeping bag cleaner, and thus, your filling in better condition.

3. Wear thermals

Thermal underwear is the warmest set of pyjamas you will ever need when camping in cold conditions. Known as a 'base layer' they will trap warmth directly against your skin and make a very big difference to your comfort in cold conditions. Make sure you put your thermals on an hour or so before you go to bed in order to make sure you are nice and warm before heading off to sleep.



Nev keeping his extremities warm on a cold winter's day in Adelaide.

4. Put on a beanie and socks

Humans lose the most heat through their heads. By wearing a beanie to bed, or tightening the hood of your sleeping bag, you can trap more warmth. When your body starts to get cold,



it will take blood away from the extremities such as your feet, in order to keep it around your vital organs. By heading to bed with warm socks on, you can keep your feet warm. This means your body will keep the blood flowing to them and this all equals a better night's sleep.

5. Eat a big dinner!

Your body will use a lot of energy to digest your dinner. All this energy will produce heat and keep you warm. By eating a decent sized dinner, and making sure it's full of low GI carbohydrates, your body will keep burning fuel all through the night. Two-minute noodles give you enough energy for 2 minutes. A big bowl of spaghetti bolognese, on the other hand, will give you a good night's sleep! Just don't eat too much, and go easy on the garlic or you'll be awake with indigestion!

No matter how old or the quality of the sleeping bag you own, these tips will help you get the best performance out of it. So, hopefully, you can get a good night's sleep even on those cold winter nights.

This post was updated for 2017.

Do you practice any of these tricks? Got any more to add? Comment below.