



Choosing a sleeping mat for your overnight hiking adventures can be a confusing affair! There's a lot to consider – comfort, weight, size (both packed and inflated), and then comparing all those details against price and your budget can positively make your head spin. Some lightweight mats carry a significantly steep price tag on account of all the new technologies and fabrics incorporated into their design. It's not easy to decide, and what works for one person won't necessarily work for another.

Below, we've listed our top-selling lightweight hiking mats over the last 12 months, but before we get into the countdown, let's cover some of the common questions we get about lightweight hiking mats...

Are hiking mats noisy to sleep on?

Air-filled mats, such as the Thermarest Neo Air (not in this list) and the Sea to Summit air-filled mats, create more noise than self-inflating mats. The good news is that this noise is usually due to the fabric being new, so it will decrease over time and is a small trade-off for a lot more comfort.



When brand spanking new, some mats may make a tiny bit of noise. Image: Thermarest

What is a bonded sleeping mat?

This question refers to the self-inflating mats, where the outer fabric layer is glued (bonded) to the inner foam. This creates a sturdier sleeping surface and allows the mat to be inflated tightly.

How do I care for my sleeping mat?

Wherever possible always use something between your body and the mat, such as a [sleeping bag](#) or [liner](#). This reduces the amount of oil and sweat that soaks into the mat. Should your mat need cleaning, use a mild soap with warm water and a soft-bristled brush to gently clean the surface.

How do I store my sleeping mat?

Self-inflating mats (the ones that are full of dense foam) are best stored inflated. This ensures the foams' memory is in an expanded state which shortens the time it takes at camp for the mat to inflate. Air-filled mats and air-filled insulated mats are much easier to care for. They are best stored loosely rolled, but if space is a premium, they can be rolled up and stored in their stuff sack once they're clean and dry.



*Store your hiking mat properly so that it stays in good condition for many more adventures.
Image: Thermarest*

What size sleeping mat should I get?

If you're in the ultra-lightweight category, then you'll probably want to consider the shorter version of any mat. This reduces weight, but you may need to use something else to insulate your feet if the ground is cold. If weight is not a big concern and you just want comfort, or you are a cold sleeper, then choose a mat that is roughly the same length as you are in height.

Width should also be considered, especially for users with larger frames. Women's sized sleeping mats are usually shorter than the men's equivalent and often have increased insulation around the feet and hips.



Unless weight is an issue, go for the size that matches your height. Image: Sea to Summit

What is R-value?

R-value is an indication of how well the mat resists the transfer of heat from one side to another. This applies to the heat or cold from under the mat, as well as the heat your body may lose into the mat.

The higher the value, the less likely it is you will feel cold from the ground and the more body heat you will retain. For those who want to understand R-value a little better, check out this article [here](#).

There is now a new industry standard for R-value called ASTM F3340-18. Whilst the concept of R-value remains the same, the actual testing methods for the value have been updated. This has been introduced in a bid to create a level playing field for R-value across brands and to help consumers make more informed choices when comparing the performance of sleeping pads.

The ASTM F3340-18 was introduced in 2020 and to date, not every manufacturer has tested their mats to this new standard. This makes things tricky as you can only really make a true comparison between mats that are both tested to the industry standard.

We'll make sure we update information on our website as we receive the latest test data from our suppliers.



In cold conditions, a higher R-value will help prevent you from feeling the cold. Image: Thermarest

Mat Types

Closed-Cell Foam

These are made of dense [foam](#) with thousands of airtight bubbles inside. They do not compress down, don't offer much comfort, but they insulate really well and are indestructible, lightweight and very affordable.

Air-Filled Mats

These consist of chambers or cells that require inflation before use. Air-filled mats usually offer a lot of comfort for their relative weight and packed size. They are not self-inflating and should they get a puncture, will not offer any comfort at all. Insulated versions have chambers of synthetic fill or down to help trap warm air.

Air-filled mats are usually the choice for lightweight trekkers and adventurers. Image: Sea to Summit

Self-Inflating Mats

These mats are slabs of open-cell foam, often with holes or cores cut out. Durable fabric is bonded to the foam at the surface and sealed on the edges to create an airtight mat. The expanding foam is what creates the *self-inflating* feature, but this also means they require a little more muscle to compress the foam when packing your mat away. The other benefit of these mats is that if a puncture does occur, they still offer some padding and insulation.

Filled with expanding foam, a self-inflating mat is a very comfy choice, though not as light. Image: Sea to Summit

Okay, so now that we've got those questions out of the way, let's have a look at Snowys best-selling sleeping mats for hiking over the last 12 months. We'd like to note here that we choose the products we range based on value for money, feedback from our customers, as well as the quality and support from the manufacturer.

10. Klymit Static

New to us about six months ago, it's exciting to see the Klymit range already holding a place in our best-sellers list. Their fresh design sets them apart and there's a model to suit all adventurers and any type of sleeper.

The most popular seller out of the six sleeping pads that we're currently stocking is the Static V2. This pad is 12% lighter than the Static V but like all the V-models - including the Insulated, Luxe, and Double versions - it features a V-chamber design and body mapping technology. For couples, the Double is definitely one to consider given its affordable price and small packed size, and for those counting every gram, Klymit's Inertia Ozone Sleeping Pad eliminates all unnecessary weight yet still manages to provide ample support where you need it most.

Why buy this mat: affordable comfort and support in any sleeping position.

9. Exped Downmat

The [Exped](#) Downmats have returned to the list this year and understandably so with their superior warmth and comfort. We only carry the long and wide (LW) versions as weight is often a secondary concern for adventurers wanting a warm and comfortable mat.

Both the [7 LW](#) and [9 LW](#) feature 700 Fillpower Goosedown which provides an exceptional level of insulation for a hiking mat. At 7cm and 9cm thick respectively, it's the slightly thicker of the two that takes the gong with a few more sales. Although these mats might not be the lightest option around, they have an integrated pump and are perfect for [motorcycle touring](#) where you can get away with carrying a little extra weight.

Why buy this mat: air filled with outstanding warmth for winter adventures.



8. Thermarest Z Lite

Coming in at number 8 we have the accordion-design [Z Lite](#) from [Thermarest](#). Some feedback has suggested this mat is slightly bulky, but its reduced weight and budget-friendly price tag make it worth the slightly extra packed size.

It's a closed-cell foam construction with heat-trapping dimples that provide just enough protection, and can also be used as an extra layer of thermal insulation underneath another mat. This mat doesn't dazzle you with a whole lot of specs and is a straight-up, no-nonsense option that's easy to pack up and gives you a comfy base between you and the ground.

Why buy this mat: an affordable, ultralight mat that's virtually indestructible.



7. 360 Degrees Adventurer 2.5

The [Adventurer 2.5 Self Inflating Mat](#) from [360 Degrees](#) has popped into our best-sellers list for the very first time! With so many newbies giving camping and hiking a go over the past year, it's great to see this entry-level mat having a turn in the limelight.

Its tapered mummy profile cuts unnecessary weight and keeps the design simple. Self-inflating and one of the most affordable hiking mats we have, 360 Degrees has built a solid reputation for balancing quality and price.

Why buy this mat: an unbeatable starting point for young adventurers.



6. Thermarest Prolite

Thermarest pioneered the self-inflating mat back in the 1970s. A former Boeing engineer had an 'Ah-ha' moment in his garden one day, and ever since the [Thermarest brand](#) has been synonymous with lightweight hiking sleeping mats.

Of all the mats Thermarest has produced over the last 40+ years, the Prolite has been the most popular. This range consistently ranks somewhere in this list year after year, and each

time the models are refined to offer an excellent balance of comfort, weight and durability. They come in unisex versions at 2.5cm and 3.8cm thick as well as women's specific cuts in the same thicknesses - 2.5cm and 3.8cm. It's the thicker Prolite Plus models that have proved to be the most popular this year.

Why buy this mat: proven performance and reliability, and backed with a lifetime warranty.



5. Black Wolf Hexatherm

We made the call last year when we predicted that Black Wolf's Hexatherm mat would gain traction and look at it now! Released onto the market at the end of 2019, it's shot to number 5 and it's no surprise given the design and competitive pricing.

This hiking range includes the Pro Hiker, the Lite Hiker, and the Hiker Hybrid which is also available in a 3/4 size. Specs vary between each model with the Pro Hiker being the largest and weightiest, but the fabric feels more luxurious so it's arguably comfier than the others.

Why buy this mat: easy to inflate and good value for money.



4. Exped Synmat

Providing excellent insulation, matched with the high-quality construction and design for which Exped is renowned, the Synmat range has been around a long time. Recent years have seen a resurgence in its popularity and although they've dropped back a few spots from their 2020 ranking, the design is still a reliable favourite.

Depending on the model you get, these mats offer either 7cm or 9cm thick air-filled tubes that are filled with synthetic insulation. As the tubes fill with air, the synthetic inside expands and helps trap warm air. As an added bonus, these mats have an integrated pump, which when combined with the one-way deflation valve, makes setup and pack-away really easy. New to us this year is the Duo that features a slight tapering towards the base and is a double version of the 7cm single. Unlike the singles, the Duo doesn't have the integrated pump and instead uses a Schnozzel Pumpbag pump sack and features a couple of extra valves to make inflation and deflation super quick and easy.

Why buy this mat: provides lightweight and reliable insulation and comfort.



3. Sea to Summit Ether Light XT

They might have dropped back a spot since last year but these mats are still a hit! The Ether Light XT from Sea to Summit continues to give every other mat in this category a run for its money. Slightly quieter than the Ultralight mats due to the larger baffle design, Ether Light XT mats take it to another level with 10cm of comfort, 3 season insulation, and full-body support. With Insulated, Women's specific, and Non-insulated versions available, there's a model for every lightweight hiker. For those wanting something for alpine or winter

conditions, there are now also two expedition models in a choice of sizes and styles – the Extreme insulated and a Women’s specific version. These both feature air-sprung cells and dual-density insulation which gives them an impressively high R-value. They weigh a bit more than the originals but that’s the trade-off for winter warmth.

Side-sleepers have been rejoicing over these mats as their generous thickness lends itself to ongoing comfort no matter your position. It’s the original Insulated model that’s really smashed it out of the park with sales but with so many versions available, there’s one for every lightweight hiker undergoing any type of adventure.

Why buy this mat: upgrade to more comfort without compromising weight.



2. Sea to Summit Air Sprung Cell

With every one of these updates, year after year, these mats come in strong. So this time we’ve decided to group them together according to their technology and within this grouping, we have the Comfort Plus ASC range, the Comfort Light mats, and leading the pack in sales are the Ultralights. This best-selling version took the trophy last year and feature a single layer of inflatable cells that conform to your body when you sleep. There are two models – insulated and non-insulated and each is available in a choice of sizes. Lightweight hikers love these mats as they weigh less than 600g for the large version and are 5cm thick.

Moving on to the Comfort Light mats, Sea to Summit has refined this range which now comprises the insulated version and the insulated women’s specific. These mats are probably the most versatile in the brand’s inflatable range and are made to provide warmth where it is needed and save weight where it is not. The Comfort Plus range has also seen a little tailoring and now includes the 6.3cm thick insulated model and the 8cm XT. The XT weighs just over 1kg but if that’s not an issue, then this plush rectangular mat will offer some serious comfort. The Comfort Light range is made with two independent inflatable layers and provides custom comfort and a level of redundancy in the event of a puncture.

Why buy this mat: compact comfort and versatility.



1. Sea to Summit Self Inflating

Here we are at number 1! Taking the gong this year is Sea to Summit’s SI collection that uses Delta Core to remove excess weight and bulk. These mats have been a consistent best-seller in past years and with loads of variations, it’s easy to understand why. There’s the Camp Mat range, the Camp Plus, the Comfort Plus SI mats, the Comfort Light SI’s, and the Ultra Light SI mats in hiking and women’s specific.

All of them have proven popular with our customers but it’s the entry-level Camp Mat SI, and the Comfort Plus SI in its tapered, rectangle, and women’s specific options that have come out in front. These have been closely followed by the Comfort Light SI mats which have moved from getting an ‘honourable mention’ in 2019, to sixth place in 2020. There are two styles and each offers a choice of sizes – the original or the women’s specific version. With so many self-inflating choices from Sea to Summit, you’re sure to find a balance of thickness,



weight and warmth to suit your needs.

Why buy this mat: versatile all-rounder for any adventure.

What to look out for next year?

Well, usually, it's the technical brands such as Sea to Summit and Exped that have been the ones to watch when it comes to lightweight mats. But since Klymit has hit the scene, we reckon they'll continue to gain interest and will move their way closer to pole position next year! Will they prove strong enough to push Sea to Summit out of the top 3? Who knows, stay tuned for next year's update...

What's the best hiking mat you've ever used?