



So, you've just made a sizeable investment in a quality swag or tent, and you're looking for ways to ensure that it stays cared for and protected for as long as possible. The first thing you should consider is a groundsheet (sometimes also referred to as a footprint, ground tarp or floor saver).

Groundsheets exist to protect the floor of your tent against everything that nature throws at it from the ground up. They're often not as cheap as you'd hope, but it certainly does sooth the frustration when faced with damage in that you only need to replace the groundsheet and not the entire tent or swag.

## Benefits of a groundsheet

Groundsheets also assist with waterproofing your tent or swag floor; act as a barrier in wet conditions; preserves the vegetation underneath your swag or tent; acts as a wind or weather break; help prevents condensation, and offers an emergency shelter when you need it.



*Groundsheets can do a whole lot more than protecting the underside of your tent or swag.*

*Photo: Oztent*

## Regulations of groundsheets

Believe it or not, there are actually some rules around the use of groundsheets, especially in privately run caravan parks.

The most common one is that groundsheets in some caravan and camping parks can only be made of open weave shade cloth fabric. This is to allow the grass to breathe so that damage can be minimised. This makes sense as no one enjoys a dusty campsite and grass does require some upkeep to be maintained.

Some caravan and camping parks are now also asking that you lift up or even move your groundsheets (and the tent or swag) at frequent intervals to help maintain the health of the grass.



*Mesh groundsheets will be necessary for some places to protect the grass. Photo: Black Wolf*

## Groundsheet Options:

### Made to fit

These are groundsheets designed by manufacturers to specifically fit under their tents. In most instances, the groundsheet also fits under the awning. Usually made in the mesh fabric, some are still only available in solid fabric. The major benefit here is that you can purchase with confidence, and be assured of a perfect fit without a hassle.

Some of the tents in the Snowys current range that have made to fit groundsheets available separately include:

- [Black Wolf Turbo Tents](#)
- [Oztent RV Tents](#)



- [Oztrail Tourer Tents](#)
- [Zempire Aerodome Tents](#)
- Most Hiking Tents from [MSR](#), [Zempire](#), [Marmot](#) & [Wilderness Equipment](#)



*The Oztent [RV1](#), [2](#), [3](#), [4](#) and [5](#) are models that have made to fit groundsheets available.  
Photo: Oztent*

## Mesh style

These groundsheets aren't made to fit, but rather come in a variety of sizes. This can be a challenge in trying to establish what groundsheet fits but also gives you some freedom to set it up as you wish. Made from a heavier-duty shade cloth type material, the major benefit to this design is that it allows the grass underneath to breathe, while also allowing moisture to fall through.

This ensures that groundsheet won't start pooling if it rains. The only real challenge with these groundsheets is that they aren't as durable as solid fabrics and can be hard to clean. Currently, here at Snowys, there are 3 mesh options available in a range of sizes:

- A durable and almost indestructible [C-Gear Multimat](#) option
- The popular and affordable [Oztrail Ultramesh](#) option
- Or a slightly different foam feel of the [Kookaburra Annex Mat](#)



*A mesh tarp is probably the most versatile option for a groundsheet. Photo: Coleman Australia*

## Solid style

Solid styles aren't made to fit but do come in a range of sizes to suit. These aren't as popular as mesh, due to restrictions now placed upon them in caravan and camping parks. But the upside of the solid style groundsheets is that they offer more protection compared to mesh. While being a little easier to clean and providing a solid defence, they don't allow for grass to breathe, can increase the chance of condensation and worse still, when it rains, instead of allowing water to fall through, it will collect it underneath your tent floor.

At Snowys, the most common style of solid groundsheet available is the humble and multi-purposeful tarp which comes in a range of sizes and thicknesses including [standard](#), [heavy duty](#) and [industrial weight](#).



*Solid heavy duty tarps are more hardwearing and offer more protection.*

## DIY groundsheets

The last option for a groundsheet is for you to get a little creative with items you may already have. You might have some extra shade cloth, building materials, such as Tyvek or Plastic, disposed of curtains or old pool covers.



There are a few possibilities here for you to recycle what you already own. Hikers could consider using items such as an emergency blanket from their first aid kit as well.



*A great option is to re-purpose what you already have as a groundsheet.*

## **Measuring up for a Groundsheet**

Now, a question we get asked a lot here at Snowys is, **“Will this groundsheet fit my tent?”** So, we’ve decided to let you in on our secrets in how we figure out whether a groundsheet will work.

### **1. What area do you want to cover?**

You need to first think about what area you want to cover with a groundsheet. The base of the swag or tent is a given, but do you want some protection through the awning area(s) or beyond the perimeter of the tent itself?



*View the floorplan of your tent on the Snowys website, so you can get the correct dimensions for the groundsheet you’ll need.*

### **2. Check the dimensions of your tent**

Once you’ve decided on the area you want to cover, look at the external dimensions of your tent. We list these in the specifications column on each of our products pages, as well as in the tent floorplan (usually the last image). This will give you an idea of measurements for the area size you want to cover.

Once you look at sizes available, determine whether you’ll be able to get the coverage you’re after with one groundsheet or if you’ll need to use a two or more together.



*You may need to use more than one tarp side by side to get a good fit for your shelter.*

### **3. Making It Fit**

It’s unlikely that you’ll get a perfect fit. You can opt for a slightly smaller size that doesn’t give complete coverage, which makes it easy initially but in the long run, it leaves your tent exposed to damage.

Or you can choose a slightly bigger size which provides complete coverage, but you’ll likely need to make some alterations.

## **Can I alter my groundsheet?**

We recommend against altering the size of the groundsheet. You’ll risk cutting it crooked, lose valuable coverage for other uses, and remove the reinforced edging which will cause fraying.



Rather, we'd encourage you to fold the excess underneath the tent or allow the excess tarp to exceed your tent and peg through the groundsheet.

Pegging through the groundsheet is a common alteration, but to ensure you get it right, here are our tips.



*Consider the position of your tent, make the hole, and then reinforce it to prevent fraying.*

## **How to peg through a groundsheet properly:**

- We recommend laying your groundsheet out and then placing your tent on top of the groundsheet as desired.
- From there, look to peg out the tent as you normally would, but on this occasion penetrating through the groundsheet.
- Take your time to ensure you only need one go at each peg and only peg what is required.
- The important thing is you may need to reinforce each hole with tape or brass eyelets to stop it from fraying or continuing to rip.
- You can do this by using a heavy-duty tape, an adhesive glue or stitching strong thread around each hole.
- It's also worth noting on your groundsheet where the front/rear is so that your tent and holes align next time.

**So, that's about it when it comes to groundsheets. If you have any further questions about protecting your tent, then fire away in the comments.**