



Winter is out in full force, which means stormy grey skies, darker days and scraping ice off your windscreen in the morning. If you don't want to let a little drizzle stop you from enjoying your weekend day trips, then you're probably relying on your rain jacket to keep you nice and dry when the forecast says rain.

During a shower, you might have noticed that the water on your rain jacket is no longer beading off. If you're seeing that it's wet through in some spots, the good news is, it's not quite ready for the donation bin. You probably just need to revive the DWR (durable water repellency) which is easily done!

Oil or dirt build up is what is making your jacket less breathable and water repellent, so giving it a clean should have it back to normal again. But, before you chuck it in the washing machine with this week's dirty clothes, make sure you know how to give your garment the proper care.

If you're keen as a bean to head out on more day hikes, then read through the following steps for reviving your waterproof jacket.



If you're hiking in winter, you'll need to stay dry and warm in your rain jacket. Image: Sea to Summit

1. Check the pockets, loosen the drawcords and do up the zips

Check the pockets for leftover trail mix, tissues or other things that you don't want to be washed in with your jacket. Loosen any drawcords on the hood or sleeves and then do all the zips up.

2. Prepare your washing machine

Clean out any leftover detergent or laundry powder in the machine tray. This step is important because conventional detergent can actually be detrimental to your waterproof garment. In some instances, the ingredients actually absorb water instead of repelling it, which isn't the aim of the game here.



Make sure you use a specialised cleaner for maximum efficiency.

3. Add a waterproof textile wash

Then add the amount of specialised [Nikwax Tech Wash](#), or a similar product that is designed to clean Gore-tex, SympaTex, eVENT, Permatex and other wet weather fabrics according to the instructions.

4. Set it to the correct cycle

Then set it to the cycle and temperature stated on the care label.



5. Air or tumble dry it

Air or tumble dry the garment, and voila! Your jacket is ready for your next wintry adventure.



Once you've washed the jacket, the DWR coating should be rejuvenated.

Extra tips for hiking in the rain

1. Check how waterproof your shoes are

If your boots are looking a little weatherbeaten, it may be a good idea to test their performance by chucking them under the tap in the sink to ensure the water is still beading off. If they're not repelling water properly, then check out our guide to waterproofing and conditioning your hiking boots [here](#).

Check the tread as well, to make sure it's not too worn out so you still have plenty of grip when hiking on wet ground and rocks.

2. Gaiters

If you're going to be wading through creeks and rivers, [gaiters](#) will offer some extra protection against moisture. It will also shield your shoes and legs from mud – which you'll probably encounter when hiking in winter.



Gaiters come in handy for keeping off rain and mud. Image: Sea to Summit

3. Lightweight gear for keeping your head and neck warm

Once you warm up on the trail, that thick scarf or beanie is going to be a bit bulky in your day pack. Save on space and weight by grabbing a [Buff](#) instead. You can wear it as a beanie or as a scarf ([plus heaps of other ways](#)) and the material is made from moisture-wicking fabric, so it dries really quickly if you get it damp.

4. Layer your clothing

Light, warm, and slim fitting layers are best for cold weather hiking as they're easy to peel off one by one when you warm up on the trail.

Generally, when it comes to thermals, [merino wool](#) is going to give you the best performance for cold conditions. This is because it regulates your body temperature well, is naturally odour resistant and isn't bulky so it layers well.



Layer your clothes to keep nice and warm when out and about. Image: Icebreaker



5. Keep a spare dry layer + pair of socks in your backpack

Keep an extra dry layer and pair of socks in your pack with you in case all else fails and you get caught out in a freak storm. Wet feet are also a pain as the moisture causes friction in your shoes which can cause some pretty nasty blisters. For more on blister care and prevention, check out this guide [here](#).

6. Keep your phones and electronics in a waterproof case

Put your electronics in a waterproof case or dry sack, even if you are storing it inside your backpack. Your pack may be waterproof, but there's only so much you can do if it slips out of your hand or pocket and ends up in a puddle. A ziplock bag is also a cheap and effective option that you could use in a pinch, but the downside is you probably won't be able to use the screen through the plastic.



Your phone isn't any use to you wet, so pop it in a waterproof case. Image: Sea to Summit

7. Don't forget to keep your fluids + energy up

When hiking in the cold, you'll probably not notice dehydration as much as you would in warm conditions – but it's just as important as ever to stay on top of your fluid intake. Same goes for keeping your energy levels up by fuelling up regularly with snacks.



Monitor your fluid intake, even though you may not feel as thirsty in the cold. Image: Sea to Summit

8. Don't go without a light source, even for a day hike

If things don't go great, and you need to rest for longer or take shelter, then a head torch is a must. There's less light during the day in winter, so it's good to have a light source in case you're delayed in any way. Same goes for carrying basic lightweight survival gear.

What are your tips for keeping dry and safe when hiking in winter?