

FREE PRINTABLE RESOURCE

COLD-WEATHER LAYERING CHECKLIST

Three layers, one job: keep you dry. Wet is what actually gets people, not cold.

LAYER 1 — BASE (AGAINST SKIN)

- ☐ **Merino wool or synthetic top**
Wicks sweat off the skin; merino resists odor, synthetic dries faster
- ☐ **Matching bottoms for real cold**
- ☐ **Snug fit, but never restrictive**
Tight clothing cuts circulation to hands and feet
- ☐ **Zero cotton anywhere in the system**
Holds water, loses nearly all insulating value when wet

LAYER 2 — MID (INSULATION)

- ☐ **Fleece: breathable, works when damp**
- ☐ **Down: best warmth for weight, useless wet**
Only where you can reliably keep it dry
- ☐ **Synthetic fill: bulkier, forgives moisture**
- ☐ **Two thin mid layers beat one thick one**
Gives you something to shed when the work heats you up
- ☐ **Worn loose enough to trap air**

It can happen above 40°F. Hypothermia sets in at cool temperatures too if you get chilled from rain, sweat, or cold water. It's a wet problem, not just a freezing problem.

LAYER 3 — SHELL (WIND & WATER)

- ☐ **Blocks wind, sheds water, still breathes**
- ☐ **Cut roomy over everything else**
Compressing the mid layer squeezes out the warm air
- ☐ **Pit zips / two-way zipper to dump heat**
- ☐ **Hood that fits over a hat**

EXTREMITIES

- ☐ **Hat covering the ears**
- ☐ **Gloves plus a warmer backup pair**
- ☐ **Insulated, genuinely waterproof boots**
- ☐ **Wool/synthetic socks + SPARE DRY PAIR**
Wet feet lose heat 25x faster than dry feet
- ☐ **Neck gaiter or balaclava for the face**

FIELD RULES

- ☐ **Start slightly cold, vent before you sweat**
- ☐ **Add a layer back the moment you stop moving**
- ☐ **Check wind chill, not just the thermometer**
- ☐ **Change wet socks immediately**
- ☐ **Watch each other for shivering & confusion**
Below 95°F body temp = medical emergency

Full guide: tacticalbox.com/blogs/tacticalbox-blog/how-to-layer-clothing-for-cold-weather-survival

Sources: CDC, Preventing Hypothermia; OSHA, Winter Weather — Cold Stress; NWS Wind Chill Chart.