

# Nordic Skiing – Dress for Success

**Objective:** To learn how carrying and wearing proper clothing can add to skiing enjoyment by keeping a skier comfortable and safe in varying weather and terrain conditions.

By **layering** clothing, skiers stay warm and dry and can easily adjust to changing conditions. At any given time during a ski trip, some clothing may be worn while other clothing may be inside the skier's backpack. Using a three-layer system, it is easy to stay comfortable and protected from the elements while skiing and resting.

**Wicking layer** – innermost layer, moves moisture (sweat) away from skin as water vapor. Dry skin stays warm.

- Made of polypropylene or other synthetic materials. Silk and wool are not as effective. Never cotton!
- Available in different weights—light, mid, heavy. Midweight works well under many conditions.
- Usually worn throughout the ski trip, so be sure it is comfortable
- Includes panty or brief, long underwear, glove liners, sock liners, thin cap or “Buff”

**Warmth layer** – middle layer, has loft (air spaces) in which to trap the warmth from your body

- Made of fleece or wool. Never cotton! Down is risky because it loses its loft when wet.
- In warmer conditions, allows breezes to flow through to keep you from overheating
- In colder conditions, and in combination with the Wind layer, keeps you warm
- May be added or removed throughout the day as conditions change
- Includes jacket, sweater, pullover, fleece or wool pants, heavy socks, mittens, gloves, neck gaiter, thick hat, balaclava

**Wind layer** – outermost layer, keeps moisture (snow, rain) out, and traps warm air close to your body

- Made of very tightly woven or specially coated fabric, such as Gore-Tex, which allows water vapor from sweat to be expelled and prevents liquid moisture from rain or snow from entering. Never cotton!
- Prevents wind from removing warm air from the Warmth layer, and keeps water out. Dry skin stays warm.
- Head-to-toe coverage is important to prevent frostbite and super cooling from wind.
- Includes jacket hood or waterproof hat, shell jacket, shell pants, mitt covers, neoprene face mask, goggles, gaiters, boots

## Other important clothing considerations include:

- Did we say “Never cotton?” Cotton absorbs moisture and stays wet, leaving you vulnerable to dangerous cooling and hypothermia.
- Down clothing, such as jackets and pants are very lightweight and compactable. While down may not be the best for wearing while skiing, it may be useful to have in your pack as emergency gear.
- Always check the weather forecast for the day! The CAIC website at <http://avalanche.state.co.us/> has both weather and avalanche forecasts. Check temperature, wind conditions, and likelihood of precipitation.
  - When colder or snowy conditions are predicted, bring additional warm clothing, wear heavier weight long underwear, and ensure a head-to-toe Wind layer.

## Nordic Skiing – Dress for Success

- When warmer conditions are predicted, prevent excessive sweating with lighter weight long underwear.
- When sunny conditions are predicted, protect skin from sunburn with clothing and with generously and frequently applied sun screen to exposed skin. Sun reflects up from snow, so be sure to protect skin under the chin and nose.
- Consider how terrain may affect what you wear. Will trees provide windbreak? Will steep elevation gain mean heavy exertion (and heat production), then subsequent cooling on the downhill runs?
- Sunglasses or goggles with 100% UV protection are critical to prevent sun burning of the eyes, a very painful condition.
- Anticipate temperature changes and consider clothing adjustments to prevent getting too cold or too hot
  - Add a layer when stopping for lunch, the inactivity will cool you down
  - Add a Wind layer when before starting down a long hill. The reduced exertion and increased air flow will cool you down
  - Remove a layer when starting up a long hill. The increased exertion will warm you up.
- Leave room in your day pack to accommodate clothing you may remove as you warm up from the exertion of skiing.

**Where to purchase clothing for Nordic skiing:** There are many more options than those listed below, but these can get you started

Online:

- Sierra Trading Post: [www.sierratradingpost.com](http://www.sierratradingpost.com)
- REI: [www.rei.com](http://www.rei.com)
- Neptune Mountaineering: [www.neptunemountaineering.com](http://www.neptunemountaineering.com)
- Patagonia: [www.patagonia.com](http://www.patagonia.com)
- The North Face: [www.thenorthface.com](http://www.thenorthface.com)
- The Army Navy Store: [www.armynavyshop.com](http://www.armynavyshop.com)
- LL Bean: [www.llbean.com](http://www.llbean.com)

Around Denver & Colorado:

- REI stores in Denver, Boulder, Lakewood, Englewood, Colorado Springs, Ft Collins, Gr Junction
- Patagonia stores in Denver and Boulder
- Boulder Sports Recycler in Boulder
- The North Face stores in Denver and Boulder
- Neptune Mountaineering in Boulder
- Sierra Trading Post in Greenwood Village
- Target, WalMart, Costco, Sam's Club, Kohl's, etc.
- Thrift stores such as ARC Thrift Stores and Goodwill
- Yard sales