

Keeping Warm

Scotland in February can be a very cold place – ask anybody who goes skiing and they'll tell you that the February half-term holiday is the high point of the winter season. There are a number of ways to make and keep your body warm...

Food:

Food provides the body with the fuel it needs to, among other things, keep us warm. We've got a team of people who will organise the food for us but please make sure you eat well at breakfast time and take plenty of nutritious food with you to keep you warm throughout the day – your food intake really does help to keep you warm.

External heat:

I don't imagine we'll be building bonfires that we can all stand around to help us to keep warm but you may like to consider the following two strategies:

1. Take a flask with a hot drink or soup in it
2. Take a 'hand-warmer' (or two) with you – you can buy them in outdoor shops

Exercise:

When we exercise (e.g. run up and down on the spot or hug a friend) we use our muscles and this helps to generate body heat – if we do it enough we get warm enough to sweat (try to avoid sweating if the temperature is below freezing otherwise the water vapour generated can turn to ice)

Insulating your body to preserve body heat:

Clothes perform two vital functions in the wintertime:

1. They insulate us and prevent heat from escaping from our bodies. Use **several layers** of clothes on the top **and** bottom halves of your body. Use a **hat** (preferably one that covers your ears – 30% of your body's heat loss goes out through the top of your head); **gloves** (mittens tend to be warmer than gloves) and a **scarf**
2. They protect us from the rain / snow and, just as importantly, the wind. A **waterproof** and **wind-blocking** outer layer of clothing is critical when you're trying to keep warm outdoors in the winter. When you add the heat-draining effect of the wind-chill factor to a body that is already wet you have a combination that can become seriously debilitating.

Getting hold of the clothing that you'll need for this trip:

1. **You probably already own clothes** that have good insulation properties or at least things that can be used to create useful extra layers of clothing – e.g. tights or pyjamas (or both) under trousers. The value of several layers is that air is trapped between the layers and your body temperature warms the air up, keeping you warm.

2. **You can borrow clothes** from friends (or others in the Faslane group) who may have specialist winter clothing (skiers; mountaineers, etc). You are looking for: thick socks; woolly hat / balaclava; insulated gloves / mittens; thermal underwear (top and bottom); waterproof leggings and waterproof jacket. *Don't be tempted to think that you can manage without these things – you WILL get very cold standing about without them.*
3. **You can buy warm clothing** from 'outdoor' shops (e.g. 'Millets' in the shopping precinct in Coventry – by the Central Library):
 - 'Hot Pad' hand-warmers (£1.99 for two)
 - 'Hot Gel' hand-warmers (£5.99 for two – re-chargeable)
 - Thermos Flasks (£5.99)
 - Hats; gloves; waterproofs; sleeping bags; sleeping mats; etc

Contact me if you'd like to talk about the sort of clothing you should take with you to Faslane.

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