



CROSS COUNTRY SKI SHOP

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CLOTHING GUIDELINES

Helpful hints on how to dress for comfort when Cross-country skiing.

Cross-country and Alpine/Downhill skiing are quite different when it comes to clothing choices. Insulated, down-filled suits, jackets and pants are a “no-no”. Cross-country skiing will usually get the body temperature up quite quickly and will get your core temperature up much faster than coming downhill. The secret to comfortable clothing for cross-country skiing is in layering with relatively thin layers. This provides the flexibility to peel off layers as the body temperature rises.

UNDERWEAR

The first layer (next-to-the-skin) is very important. There are basically two choices.

1. Good quality synthetic, like Polypropylene, Thermax, etc. is designed to wick the moisture away from the skin into the next layer and leave you feeling dry.
2. Wool or high wool content underwear (typically brushed Merino wool) has a much softer feel than the old, rough and itchy quality of the past. Wool is a natural fiber, it does not wick, but has the unique ability to feel warm even when wet.

Cotton is not good in the winter as it retains moisture next to the skin and gets cold very fast.

MIDDLE LAYER

The middle layer can be cotton, fleece or any other breathable, comfortable fabric in the form of a turtleneck or similar. If a high neck garment is used, it is preferable that it has a zipper which can be opened to release excess heat. A vest can be a good choice to keep the torso warm while leaving the arms free to move.

Pants should be single layer, wind-breaking, smooth surface so snow does not stick to it, or one layer with a mesh or other thin lining. It should cover the top of the boots to prevent snow to get down into the boots or else it may be necessary to use gaiters.

OUTER LAYER

On calm days another medium thick fleece or sweater can often be sufficient. This will maximize breathability throughout which is very important in order to stay dry. If it is quite cold or windy, a windbreaker with a thin mesh or fleece lining may be necessary. In any case a windbreaker always needs to be brought along in the backpack. The Norseman XC Ski Shop carries ski clothing made by Louis Garneau, SportHill, Sugoi and Swix, and fashionable garments by Meister and Nils.

SOCKS

Nothing beats wool socks for keeping feet warm and comfortable. Often one pair of medium to thick wool socks is sufficient (modern boots have either Thinsulate or other microfiber lining). A thin pair of wicking, polypropylene socks (liners) first and then wool socks on top may be preferable especially for those who are prone to blisters. Again, cotton is a bad choice for winter use.

MITTS & TOQUES

Mitts must be breathable, as to prevent moisture build-up. The Norseman carries a variety of toques, mitts and gloves. Mitts are warmer than gloves.