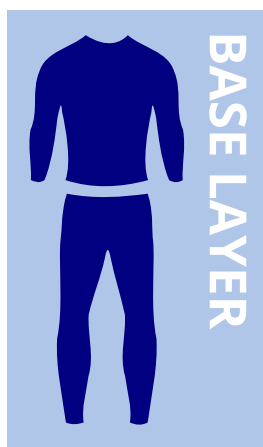


The secret to dressing for the outdoors is layering. The base layer is worn against the skin, a mid layer goes over the base, an insulating layer is next, and a shell layer is worn over everything. Layers are adjusted according to the season and conditions.



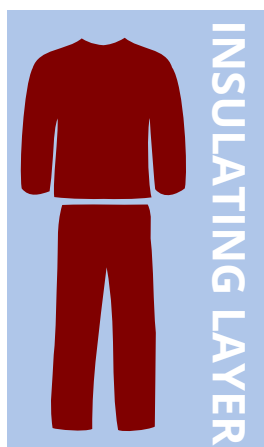
Synthetic tee shirt and undershorts for all seasons.



Synthetic or wool long underwear for cold conditions.



All-purpose layer that can be worn in any conditions.



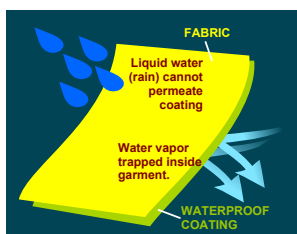
Synthetic fleece pullover, jacket or wool sweater. Synthetic fleece pants for cool to cold weather.



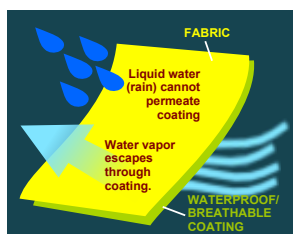
Rain jacket with hood and rain pants for all seasons.

Waterproof or Waterproof Breathable?

Basic waterproof rain gear works very well. The relatively small amount of moisture trapped inside a waterproof rain suit will be wicked away from the skin by the under layers, and you'll stay comfortable. Waterproof fabrics are less expensive.



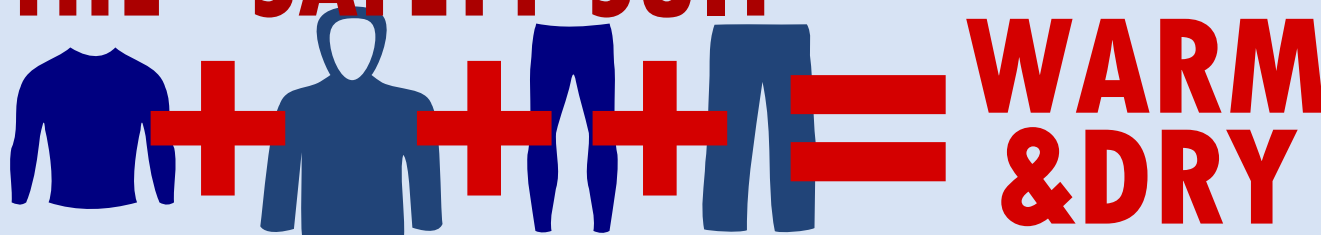
Waterproof fabrics have an impermeable coating that does not allow water vapor to escape from the inside out, but still keeps the rain out.



Waterproof breathable fabrics are constructed with a permeable membrane that permits water vapor to escape from the inside out without allowing liquid water to penetrate from the outside in.

What about Ponchos? Ponchos are awkward when doing just about anything other than sitting still. A waterproof jacket and pants are much more serviceable.

THE "SAFETY SUIT"



I know from experience a rain jacket, rain pants, and synthetic or wool long underwear tops and bottoms can keep you reasonably warm and safe in the worst kind of weather no matter what the season. **Carry these two essential layers on any trip.**



Cotton Kills

It may sound overly dramatic, but it isn't. Cotton is fine for dry, warm conditions but ideally dry and warm conditions are rare. It is much harder to stay dry and warm outdoors than most people think.

Cotton holds moisture and moisture saps body heat. When the body loses heat faster than it can produce heat hypothermia sets in. At first, this is merely uncomfortable; but it can become serious medical emergency. Hypothermia can happen at temperatures well above freezing.

Synthetic or wool fabrics insulate even when wet and are strongly recommended for cold weather. In warmer weather, a synthetic base layer draws perspiration away from the skin and keeps you cool and comfortable.