

SNOW JOB: A summer or summary of what's to come. Brrrrr!

Snow in and of itself is probably the LEAST THREATENING weather condition. In fact a 20 degree day with snow on the ground will seem noticeably warmer than the same day without snow. The same insulating qualities that make a snow filled forest so quiet will also make it feel warmer.

Snow can actually be used to protect oneself against the dangers of cold weather, because it is abundant, easy to work with and entirely effective for manufacturing windproof walls and roofs.

The MOST SERIOUS DANGER from the snow is its BRIGHTNESS, which causes a debilitating -if temporary- affliction known as "snow blindness" especially in bright sunlight. Snow blindness should ALWAYS BE GUARDED AGAINST BY WEARING SUNGLASSES or a brimmed hat to shade the eyes. If neither is available, fashion emergency goggles by tying around your head a broad strip of Birch bark with narrow slits cut into it. ** see pix ?

On the other side, the sun can be as dangerous as any other weather condition. Prolongued exposure to a hot sun can cause dehydration, heat exhaustion and finally heat stroke. Just as hot is the opposite of cold, so are the requirements of a hot weather shelter the opposite of the cold weather shelter. Where the cold weather shelter needs dead air to retain the user's body heat, the hot weather shelter needs to breathe and have as much air circulation as possible.

HOT SHELTERS:

An effective hot weather shelter can be made simply by erecting a sloped lightproof roof over a frame, leaving the sides, front and back open to allow any air currents to pass unobstructed. The space blanket works very well here. The roof should face south to keep out as much

sun as possible, and travelling through open country MUST be restricted to the hours between dusk and dawn.

The shade provided by the roof will be approximately 10 degrees cooler than the outside temperature and should be comfortable enough to allow the survivalist to sleep throughout the heat of the day. Perspiration wastes water.

COLD SHELTERS:

A thick, insulating bed is ABSOLUTELY VITAL IN COLD WEATHER and is even a good idea on a summer night. The earth is the world's best heat sink and it will absorb a human's body heat faster than it can be generated, resulting in hypothermia that can range from mild to life threatening.

WINTER BEDS:

They need not to be fancy or difficult to make. My own favorite winter bed is made from lengths of dead poplar or cottonwood logs. When these short-lived softwoods die the tops break off in the wind, leaving sections of the trunk sticking above the winter hard-pack. These dead trunks are easy to break off and several of them laid side by side on the snow with a thick covering of pine boughs will provide as much insulation from the ground as possible.

WINTER FIRE OFF THE GROUND:

Building a fire on a similar platform next to the bed will allow you to keep warm while sleeping outside in clear weather. If one is traveling and can avoid building a shelter at the end of the day's trek, why waste the effort?

FIRE HARNESSING & REFLECTORS:

Fire is one of the survivalist's best friends. It allow him to cook his food, light the darkness and most important to keep warm. But there is more to keeping warm than just lighting a fire. you need to harness as much heat from the flames as possible. Sitting in front of blazing fire in subzero weather will keep only the front of teh body warm.

To BE AS EFFECTIVE a heater as possible the warmth of the flames needs to be focused throuhg the use of a reflector, either a natural feature or one erected by the survivalist himself. A rock cliff or dirt bank makes an excellent reflector as does a space blanket suspended vertically on two poles.

Place your body between the reflector and the fire. Direct heat from the flames willwarm the portion of you body facing the fire while reflected heat from behind will warm the pther side. (The principle is the same as that used in convection oven).

For maximum heat reflection, place reflectors on 3 or 4 sides of the fire. Additional reflectors can be made from a dense latticework of branches stood on end to form a wall & stationed a minimum of 4 feet from the flames.

A fire used to heat a shelter should be positioned directly in front of the shelter entrance, about 4 feet away, and surronded on 3 sides by reflectors. The reflectors will impede the circulation of cold outside air and focus the heat from the fire directly on the door of the shelter. With this configuration, the stranded woodsman on a thick insulation bed inside the shelter will be comfortable even in a subzero blizzard.