



THE GEAR ACCORDING TO FRANK

To stay warm and comfortable, I always like to start from the skin and work out. Often people like to start with a parka and work in; but I think that is the wrong direction.

First, if it's not broken, don't try to fix it. If you have a clothing system that has worked for you in sub-zero temperatures, then you probably will want to stick with it.

Nevertheless, I would like to share my recommendations.

1. Natural fibres work better than synthetics. I prefer Merino wool in layers. A combination of a medium weight, layered with expedition weight gear is super. Merino wool retains its thermal value when damp and does not start to smell the way synthetics do after a few days of camping. A spare heavyduty sweater is always a good idea for back-up. If you don't want to have wool next to your skin, then use silk for your first layer.
2. Wool socks are essential. You need 6 to 8 pairs for most trips. If your feet are happy, then you will be happy. The more socks you have the better. Expedition weight Merino wool socks work best, but you may want to have a few medium-weight pairs as well.
3. A good thermally-efficient hat: you need a hat that is truly warm, not a fashion statement. It should fold down to cover cheeks, ears and the back of your neck. Most hats are fastened by velcro. The lining can be fleece or wool. The hat should also have a brim for sunny days, to protect your eyes – especially important on lakes and rivers. You may want to have a liner under the hat.
4. A comfortable face protector that fits well with your hat will help minimize skin exposure. There are many different styles and fabrics to choose from – you need to try some of the options to find one that both fits well and feels comfortable. The neoprene models are good, but there are styles that have wind-stop fabric and thin fleece, and these are also effective.
5. In addition to the face protector and hat with a brim, you will also need a good pair of sun glasses. You may already have prescription sunglasses – those are great. If not, you may want to try tinted goggles.
6. A good LED headlamp. There are so many models available now, that you can take your pick. You will want one that has different settings for distance and close-up, high and low beam, for more versatility and greater energy efficiency.