**Eight essentials for staying warm while cold-weather camping**

**By Gretchen Sparling**

**1. Toes cold? Put on a hat.** Your body loses up to half of its total heat in 40-degree temperatures. So, when it’s below freezing and your head is uncovered, you could be radiating more than three-fourths of your overall body heat from your head.

**2. Get off your rear end.** If you’re sitting on a snow bank or a cold rock, you’re conducting the heat from your body into the surface of the object beneath you. Often, Northern Tier cold-weather campers stand and sit atop thin foam pads.

**3. Beware of frosty fuel.** Pouring fuel into a stove? Put on a pair of thick rubber gloves. If it’s sub-zero outside, so is the fuel (since it doesn’t freeze like water). Spill it on your hands and you will have instant frostbite.

**4. Baggy clothes are back in style**— at least in the freezing-cold wilderness. Your body heats itself most efficiently when it’s enveloped in a layer of warm air. If your clothes are too tight, you’re strangling the cold right out of your body. Dressing in loose layers helps aid this convection layer of air. Tight clothes or too-tight boots can also restrict blood-flow.

**5. The three W’s**: Every cold-weather camper needs to dress for the occasion. You’ll need a wicking layer (long underwear), a “warm” layer (fleece) and a “wind” layer (waterproof shell).

**6. Bundle up!** It might be a phrase often heard from your mother, but mom is right about this one. If you’re moving around outdoors in the cold and suddenly stop to eat lunch or take a break, put your warmer layers on — even if you’re not cold. This change in activity will cause your body heat to plummet. Preempt the cold with an extra layer.

**7. Fuel the fire.** Feeling cold? Eat a snack. Staying warm is just like keeping a fire burning; every fire needs a steady supply of slow-burning fuel. Unlike a fire, you’re body will also need lots of water to help digest food and stay hydrated.

**8. Wet feet?** Grab a bag — a bread bag, that is. The long plastic bag can stretch over your foot and serve as a liner between your sock and your boot.