

CLAVEY Paddlesports

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Info Sheet: Layering

A favorite time of year to paddle for us is in the winter. The weather can be beautifully calm, no winds and clear. But the key is to be properly clothed to protect yourself from a cold water swim, or weather conditions that can change quickly. The following is some information on dressing for the elements.

The Layering System

The key to protecting yourself from heat loss is the simple concept of wearing multiple layers that will retain your body heat when you get wet. Layering lets you add or remove pieces as the day's conditions change, helping your body maintain a safe, comfortable temperature. Typically there are three main components of an efficient layering system – the base layers, insulating layers and the outer layers.

1.) Base Layer

Start with a moisture-wicking layer next to the skin. Synthetic fabrics such as polyester, nylon and polypropylene don't absorb water and move moisture away from your skin and to outer layers. Do not wear cotton. It may be comfortable when it's dry, but cotton absorbs water and dries slowly, completely losing its insulating value when wet. A couple of good choices for the base layer are [Patagonia Capilene](#) and [NRS Hydrosilk](#). [Mysterioso M-Tech](#) is a heavier weight, stretchy fleece and can be worn as a base layer and an insulation layer.



Patagonia Capilene

2.) Insulation Layer

Over the base layer you'll want one or more garments to hold in your body heat. These are neoprene or breathable synthetic pieces of varying weights and thicknesses to be worn alone or in conjunction with each other. The synthetic fibers won't absorb moisture but rather allow your sweat to radiate away from your body, keeping you more comfortable as you generate heat while paddling. Neoprene is a closed cell rubber material that is an excellent insulator but won't breathe like synthetic fibers. Thicker neoprene will be warmer but more restrictive to your body movements. Thinner neoprene will stretch much more easily but won't be quite as warm. The [3mm Farmer John](#) by Warmers is a good choice for core warmth. If your priority is mobility, check out our [NRS HydroSkin](#), a line of thin (0.5mm) neoprene garments that give considerable warmth with the comfort and mobility of thinner layers. All NRS neoprene garments are made with a glue layer between the inner nylon fabric and the neoprene foam that contains tiny particles of titanium metal. These shiny metal particles reflect back your body's heat and significantly increase warmth.



Farmer John

3.) Wind and Water Protection Layer

Wind and waterproof outer garments round out your body's core protection system. An outer layer made with a fabric featuring a breathable coating or laminate is definitely preferable. This will allow perspiration moisture to pass out of the garment, keeping the inner layers drier and significantly increasing your comfort and warmth. Outer layers come in a dizzying array of possibilities, but there are three main types: splash wear, dry wear and semi-dry wear. Splash wear is simply any waterproof outer layer that is designed to keep your under layers dry if you get splashed or rained on. For a lightweight breathable very versatile piece, the [Stohlquist Splashdown](#) in long or short sleeves works well. For wetter and colder conditions, choose the [Stohlquist Torrent ST](#) or [Kokatat Gore-Tex PacLite Pullover](#). Both

feature hoods to keep your head warm and dry in a downpour. Pair your outer layer top with some waterproof pants to complete the outfit. The **Stohlquist Treads Boater Pant** works well. A favorite for the kayak angler who will be spending a lot of time in a sit on top kayak, often with his or her feet dangling over the side, is the **Kokatat Tempest Pant** with built-in waterproof socks. If you're using neoprene as your insulation layer, wearing a waterproof garment over it will cut down on evaporative cooling from the wet outer fabric of the wetsuit. If you go for a swim in splash wear, your inner layers will get wet.

To keep water out during immersion, you need dry wear garments that have latex gaskets at the openings. **Drysuits** are the ultimate option for immersion protection. With their waterproof zippers and gaskets at the neck, wrist and ankles, they'll keep water out of your inner layers. Most of our drysuits now come with waterproof, breathable socks. A dry top and dry pant combination may leak a very small amount at the waist juncture due to torso movement, but you'll stay dry enough to be safe during a swim. For absolute waterproof protection, the **Kokatat GFER** drysuit just can't be beat. Semi-dry paddlegear splits the difference between the other two styles. There are semi-dry tops and some semi-dry suits on the market. Typically, they will feature latex gaskets at the wrists (and socks on a suit) but the neck usually features a punch through neoprene "gasket" or an adjustable neoprene cuff of some sort. Semi-dry wear is a great option for touring and recreational kayakers and rafters who want to prevent water entering their inner layers at the wrist and ankle and don't need quite such a water-tight seal at the neck. For a great value with quality features our favorite is the **Kokatat Supernova**.



Kokatat Tempest Jacket

Head Protection

In warm conditions, hats provide protection from both the rain and the sun. In cold conditions, they also help keep you warm. (Up to 75 percent of all body heat lost is lost through the head.) Look for a hat with a wide brim to block the sun/rain and a retention strap so you don't lose it in rough conditions. Our favorite for cold conditions is the **Kokatat Surfskin Bill Cap**.

Hand Protection

Paddlers' hands take a lot of abuse from wind, weather and waves. To protect yours, keep them as dry as possible. In warm conditions, a little sunscreen during the day and skin lotion at night should do the trick. Wearing gloves not only protects hands from the elements but can prevent blisters, especially for newer paddlers who may tend to have a tighter grip on their paddle. Paddling gloves made of neoprene, nylon or Lycra® spandex provide good grip and protection. You can choose full finger or half finger--**Barnacle Gloves** work well for everything but the coldest conditions. The **Stohlquist Maw Glove** and the **NRS Hydroskin Glove** are good choices for paddlers who get cold hands.



Palm Silver Suit

Footwear

Keeping your feet dry and warm can be tough on some paddling trips. They often get wet during boat entries and exits, and they can stay that way for hours, especially in rough conditions. The **Chota Mukluk** works well to keep you feet dry and warm, the neoprene extends to the knee, keeping water out when you entering and exiting your boat. Neoprene wetsuit booties work well also, but your feet will get wet when getting in and out of your boat. Adding a pair of **Mysterioso Polar M-Tech Socks** will extend the comfort of your footwear.



Stohlquist Maw



Kokatat Surfskin Bill Cap



Chota Mukluk

