

Hats, good boots keep feet warm

If your feet are cold, put your hat on. If that doesn't work, look to your footwear.

"Your feet and your head are probably the two most important parts of the body to keep warm," says Paul Risk, Michigan State University Extension specialist in park and recreation resources.

"Even at relatively high temperatures—around 40 degrees—the average person loses 50 per cent of the heat his body produces if his head is uncovered. At five degrees, you lose 75 per cent. Oftentimes, covering your head to conserve that heat will enable you to warm your own feet."

Risk is not to say that it doesn't matter what kind of footwear you choose for outdoor activities in cold weather. Risk notes. Selecting footwear appropriate to your activity is very important in keeping you comfortable.

"THE BEST TYPE of boot for you depends largely on whether you'll be moving around a lot or staying relatively still, Risk says. Boots for hiking and snowshoeing, for instance, need not be so thickly insulated as boots for snowmobiling or icefishing. Hiking boots need gripper soles of some sort and better foot support."

"The ice fisherman needs a boot primarily for insulation," Risk points out.

"All it has to do is keep his feet warm and dry while he's sitting or standing on the ice. A high-top boot, on the other hand, needs to support the foot and ankle and provide good traction and protection against briars. It should also be waterproof and well enough insulated to keep the feet dry and warm."

Boots are available with leather, nylon and rubber uppers and a wide variety of sole materials and textures, Risk observes. Leather, lace-up boots were generally designed for use under moderate temperatures. Those with nylon uppers and rubber soles tend to be warmer, but they're a little floppy for snowshoeing and similar activities.

"Right now it's a status thing to wear ankle-high mountaineering boots," Risk observes. "They have cleated soles, which are good for clinging to narrow ledges, but their steel shank makes them too inflexible for comfortable hiking. They're also very heavy and not insulated well enough for cold weather use."

ONE OF THE WARMEST boots around is the Mickey Mouse boot worn by U.S. troops in Korea. These boots are so heavily insulated that it doesn't matter that the wearer's feet get soaked with perspiration. With any

other boot, wet feet means cold feet. "Moisture transfers heat away from the body much faster than air at the same temperature," Risk explains. "It also fills up the pores in insulating materials, replacing pockets of air in the material with pockets of water. The more a boot acts like a vapor barrier and prevents moisture from escaping, the more likely it is that your feet will get wet and cold."

Anyone planning to be active outdoors in cold weather should carry at least one extra pair of felt inner boots and a change of socks, Risk advises. Being able to exchange wet ones for dry can make the difference between warm, comfortable feet and cold feet, or even frostbite.

For good traction, Risk recommends cleats over any other type of sole. "It's like the difference between snow tires and slicks," he says. He does not recommend corrugated soles. The crosswise ridges allow the foot to slip sideways.

ANKLE-HIGH boots are probably high enough for most people under normal conditions, he says. Higher boots may be necessary for keeping snow out or protecting the leg against briars or other hazards. If snow is your only worry, he suggests buying a

pair of waterproof gaiters to wear over short boots.

When buying boots, as any other footwear, be sure to wear the socks you plan to use with them when you try them on. Two pairs are usually recommended: a thick cotton sock with a thick wool one over it. Two socks help insulate the foot, and minimize blistering—they will move against each other so the boot doesn't rub against the foot. Because these fibers are absorbent, they also help to keep the foot dry.

Treat new leather boots with bear grease or some other waterproofer, Risk advises. Rub it into the leather by hand, concentrating on the seams and the junction between the upper and the sole. Then warm the boots near a heat register or in a very low oven so the grease will melt and soak in.

"Waterproofing is really a compromise measure," Risk notes. "It keeps snow from soaking through, but it also limits the leather's ability to let the moisture inside out."

One final note: there is no such thing as "a boot for all seasons," Risk says. A boot that is comfortable in winter will be too hot in summer. A summer boot may keep you reasonably warm in cold weather as long as you're active, but as soon as you stop moving, you're going to get cold.

Funerals becoming more personalized

In a recent funeral service in Livonia, those in attendance applauded as the casket was carried to the car.

Unusual. Yes. But it is reflective of the new thinking in funeral services. The deceased was a member of a drama club, so his friends decided that applause was important to him.

During the ceremony, a song he sang in a recent play was performed, and members of the club wore the special club T-shirt to the event.

"To some, this might be morbid," said Frederick Walsh Jr. of Maney-Burrell and Turowski, Livonia funeral directors. "But they felt it was appropriate."

Funeral directors are now beginning to encourage grieving friends and family to redesign the funeral service to make it more personal.

LIFE APPRECIATION service is the name that funeral directors give to

their new thinking about the ceremony for the deceased.

"The services were conceived out of a sincere effort to respond to the needs of the individual in a helpful and meaningful way," read a brochure from the seminar. "It is a service with a purpose, reflecting personal values and individual feelings."

"Life appreciation services are for the family and friends of those whose lives could best be remembered through a service that is not entirely traditional."

"The main rule is that the only rules are those that love and dignity make appropriate."

The concept started in California, said Walsh, due to the fact that a large percentage of people there have no religious affiliation.

"We feel in Michigan religion is most important," he added, "but we give people an opportunity to

incorporate into the ceremony things about a person's life that were important."

HE POINTED out that in a small ceremony he attended those present told of two incidents that took place involving themselves and the deceased.

"The lady was a very giving person, and all the incidents concerned what she had done for the person who told the story," he said. "It gave the husband of the deceased a chance to hear what she'd done for others. What they confirmed was what he felt about her."

"The ceremony was moving and beautiful. Something like that was very beneficial to the spouse."

In a large family such a small intimate ceremony is not always possible, he said, but a friend might read an open letter about the person who died. Music important to the dead person could also be incorporated. In one service, Elvis Presley music was included during the visitation because the deceased woman was a Presley fan.

"The old way is best if that is what the family wants," said Walsh. "But we also offer another avenue to help

the family through the grief process. We don't tell the family what to do. We let them decide what is best."

Communication courses offered

Improving relationships and communication with others will be the focus of nondegree courses conducted by the Oakland University Division of Continuing Education day and evenings at the Birmingham Center for Continuing Education beginning Jan. 22.

On Mondays, beginning Jan. 22, at the Birmingham Center for Continuing Education, courses will be offered in interpersonal communication from 10 to 11:30 a.m. and memory power from 12:30 to 2 p.m.

On campus Tuesdays, "The Positive You" will be conducted from 7 to 10 p.m.; on Wednesdays, assertiveness training will be conducted from 7 to 10 p.m.; and on Thursdays, introduction to transactional analysis from 7:30 to 10 p.m.

Courses run from five to eight weeks. For a brochure detailing the courses and for registration information, call the continuing education office, 377-3120.



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