



CYCLE CLOTHING TIPS – WINTER WEAR



Advice and guidance about 'Technical' clothing.

Staying warm, (or cool for that matter) is a question of wearing the correct type of clothing. Many think that less heat - more clothes is the answer, yet the wrong clothing can be counterproductive in your quest for warmth.

There are three layers of technical clothing guaranteed to keep you warm or cool.

Base layers (Wicking)

These are the "next to the skin layers" which play a major part in your comfort. They keep your skin dry and free from perspiration. To do this they have to be made of fabrics that "wick" - pull moisture away from your skin by capillary action so that it can evaporate on the outside of the fabric or pass through other layers. Base layers also provide insulation.

Insulating mid layers

Mid layers keep us warm by trapping our own heat and using it to insulate. Fleece is lightweight yet a good insulator with high warmth. Different thickness of fleece provide different levels of insulation - thicker warmer. Using fleece with different characteristics - stretch, wind-proofing, wicking and water resistance you can create climate protection for your body to suit every type of cycling.

Weatherproof shell layers

This layer defends us from the elements allowing the other layers to work effectively. These garments provide the ideal balance of weatherproofing and breathability. They are also exceptionally durable and often totally windproof and waterproof.

And in this category we have Windstoppers.

They do what they say on the label and provide protection against even the coldest wind, light rain and snow yet allow moisture out during high activity. The secret is the combination of high performance Gore technology and a durable water repellent treatment (DWR) of the face fabric. Find windstopper fabrics in gilets, tops, trousers and gloves.

Gloves

Invest in various forms of winter glove to suit the conditions in which you prefer to ride. Use an insulated pair when it's cold. It's better to have your hands sweating because it gets warm, rather than suffering cold digits, closely followed by the hot stinging pains as the blood returns to your hands and you can't feel the brake levers!

Leg gear including Tights and leg warmers

Stretchy close fitting tights are great to keep legs comfortable and warm. Fleecy backed fabrics are snug next to your skin and stay warm, even when they're wet. Look for double-layer knees to keep your joints toasty. Calf-length tights are great for days when it's not too cold but you want to keep your knees warm. And leg warmers can be added to existing clothing. You can use the knitted type you see dancers wearing - cheaper and warm but not wind stopping.





Tights Leg warmers Knee warmers Dance leg warmers (camouflage available!)
Footwear

Bike ride spoilt because of cold feet? Cold feet can be marginally worse than those cold hands. So, what can you do about it?

You'll possibly need to invest in shoes or boots specifically for the winter; summer shoes are useless in the winter.

Alternatively cover your summer shoes with cycle overshoes that are either waterproof or offer insulation. Or use old bigger size walking socks and pull them over your shoes. If you have cleats just cut a hole in them. But be warned you may wear these out very quickly and when wet discard! You can buy waterproof socks that last longer.

Headgear

No horror stories, though we could tell one of why you should not really dispense with the helmet in preference to a warm woolly hat in winter. Non-scientific testing (falling off your bike) has proven that a woolly hat does not offer the same level of protection, as does a helmet.

There are many forms of thin insulating head covering available which can easily be worn under your helmet, you often only have to adjust the chinstrap.

Gilets -

A gilet is perfect for use on a bike, especially if you set off early in the morning before the air has warmed up. The windproof fabric keeps your body warm on the front where the chilly wind hits it without making your back too hot. They are light and easy to roll up and store when things warm up.



Headband



Skull cap



Balaclava



Gillet

And some products from outdoor clothing and cycle shops:



Warm gloves £3.99

<http://www.hikebikeandride.com>



Overshoes £12.99



Thermal tights £24.99

www.wiggle.co.uk

See also www.universal-textiles.com and Blacks outdoor for discounted stuff.