

FABRIC	ADVANTAGES	DISADVANTAGES
COTTON	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comfortable against the skin • Breathable and conducts heat away from body under warm conditions • Readily available to purchase • Easily laundered in all temperatures • Tightly woven cotton fabric blocks some wind 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Absorbs water readily (7% of its weight in moisture), becomes heavy and dries slowly • Great conductor (6 Kcal/m²) making it a poor insulator especially when wet • Tends to mildew under constant wet, humid conditions • Dangerous - major contributor to hypothermia in chilly, wet, or windy weather
WOOL	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducts (2 Kcal/m²) little heat (1/3 as much as cotton) and has wicking properties • Insulates even when wet (fibers are resilient and spring back allowing air to be trapped) • Is somewhat hydrophobic (sheds water) because of residual animal oils left in the unprocessed fibers • Can be bought for a cheap price at used clothing stores (be sure an tear out cotton liners) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too scratchy for some folks • Wet dog smell when wet • Can be heavy and bulky • Don't wash in hot water and dry in your dryer unless you want to dress very small children
SYNTHETICS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Very light weight (fraction of the weight of wool) • Absorb very little water yet will function as a wicking layer • Poor thermal conductor therefore an effective insulator • Dries rapidly (especially when worn) • Comfortable against skin • Non-allergenic • Less prone to mildew and rot • Come in a variety of colors, weights, and blends 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tend to be expensive (have to shop for the bargains) • Will melt or burn readily when exposed to extreme heat • Many synthetics tend to hold body odor ("poly pro" becomes "smelly pro" or "poly pew") • Will wear out quickly if proper care instructions are not followed • Many insulators provide little protection from wind and must be worn with a wind shell
BLENDS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combine the best qualities of each fabric, frequently adding to the strength and abrasion resistance. • Can be a combination of a number of fabrics (nylon, cotton, wool, synthetics and others) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Blending can combine weaknesses of each fabric. • Blends containing cotton absorb water readily and freeze in cold weather