<table>
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<tr>
<th>FABRIC</th>
<th>ADVANTAGES</th>
<th>DISADVANTAGES</th>
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| COTTON | • 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 |
|        | • 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   | • 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) |
|        | • 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 | • 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 |
|        | • 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 | • 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) |
|        | • Blending can combine weaknesses of each fabric.   
         • Blends containing cotton absorb water readily and freeze in cold weather |