

Here are the tips "Bedding Down Without The 'ow'"

Get a good night's sleep outdoors by staying dry, comfortable, and on the level.

Camping represents the cornerstone of Scouting: Kids love sleeping on the ground in a tent or under the stars. But for some adults, "sleeping out" doesn't offer much in the way of an enjoyment. They have to pitch the tent, manage the bedrolls, and arrange the gear. Inevitably, the ground slopes or offers a bunch of lumps. Often, they find that one side of the tent is more comfortable than the other. And then there's the argument about who sleeps where. Worse, heavy rain can cause a middle-of-the-night washout.

You're thinking a city-soft body needs at least two nights to adjust to the wild outdoors. Right? Don't believe it. The key to comfort is how you pitch your tent and prepare your bed. Teens are tough, so your boys will adjust quickly. That means that except on bitter-cold nights, your boys will be comfortable enough without an air mattress or foam pad. But if they do feel cold coming up from the ground, have them place their spare clothes "shoulder-to-thighs" under their sleeping bags.

Tip: If you or your boys want some type of pad, carpet can be an inexpensive substitute.

#### A SLOPING SITE

Conventional wisdom advises that you pitch your tent with the head end uphill, and then pile clothes under your legs to level the site. But this creates a hammock effect that may produce a morning backache. A better plan? Pitch the tent perpendicular to the drop (one side lower than the other). Then, level your trail mattress by placing clothes under the downhill side. You're creating a "level trough" that's much more comfortable to sleep in than a "hammock."

Tip: A down vest stuffed into a cotton pillow sack makes a luxurious pillow.

#### PROTECT AGAINST FLOWING GROUNDWATER

If you're pitched in a low spot and it rains hard enough, groundwater will flow into your tent. Old-timers controlled water flow by digging a trench around their tent--a procedure that causes serious soil erosion and, consequently, has become illegal everywhere. Instead, place an oversize plastic ground cloth inside your tent. Make the ground cloth large enough to flow about a foot up the side walls of your tent. Any groundwater that gets into your tent will be trapped beneath the plastic sheet, and you'll stay dry. And unless you want to throw a sponge party, don't place another ground cloth under the tent floor to protect it from punctures. Groundwater that becomes trapped between the floor and ground sheet below will be pressure-wicked by body weight into your tent.

Tip: Old ideas die hard. You might think it's crazy to put the ground cloth inside your tent, but try it and you'll never get wet. Also inspect the inside of your tent after pitching, for small cuts or holes that may have been created from chafing or punctures. If you find small holes, place a patch of duct tape over the hole (must be dry) for a temporary repair.

#### COVER YOUR SLEEPING PAD

On summer nights, you might want to forego the sleeping bag and lay directly on your air mattress or foam pad--except the plastic/nylon covering on these pads becomes too hot and sticky. The solution: Make a fitted-cotton flannel cover for your pad. The cotton wicks away sweat, guards against punctures, and prevents the pad from sliding around on the slick plastic ground sheet below.

Tip: Place your spare clothes along the sides of your mattress so that your arms won't chill if they fall off the pad.

Remember you heat the sleeping bag not the reverse. Thickness is warmth add blankets if you have to.

A high calorie snack before bed time will keep you warm. Stay away from an over abundance of sugar. Cheese is great. Increasing your metabolism keeps you warm.

Do not sleep with your mouth and nose in your sleeping bag. This brings moisture into your bag which will cool you down.

Cover your head when you sleep.

Strain muscles against one another to gain warmth while falling asleep.

Unroll your sleeping bag early on dry days so it can fluff up as much as possible. On humid or rainy days, however, leave the bag in its stuff sack (or rolled up) until bedtime so it won't absorb moisture from the air.

Use a blanket to close off the opening of your sleeping bag around your head/neck to eliminate the warm air from escaping your bag when you adjust positions.

That is all for now.

Thanks Allen T.