



# COLD WEATHER PADDLING

WHAT YOU NEED TO KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

*A PALMETTO PADDLER PRESENTATION BY EDYE JOYNER*

# WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT PADDLING IN COLD CONDITIONS?

- 1: WHAT COMBINED WATER & AIR TEMPERATURE DO YOU HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT HYPOTHERMIA?
- TRUE OR FALSE:
  - 2: HYDRATION IS NOT IMPORTANT DURING COLD WEATHER.
  - 3: YOU SHOULD TAKE EXTRA PRECAUTIONS EVEN WHEN PADDLING A FAMILIAR RIVER OR BODY OF WATER.
  - 4: PADDLER EXPERIENCE ISN'T A CONCERN WHEN PADDLING ON A COLD DAY.

# ANSWERS


- 1: COMBINED WATER AND AIR TEMP OF 120°F OR LESS CAN CAUSE HYPOTHERMIA.
- 2: FALSE. PROPER HYDRATION AND NOURISHMENT HELP PROTECT AGAINST FATIGUE AND HYPOTHERMIA.
- 3: TRUE. THE DIFFICULTY OF ANY BODY OF WATER IS INCREASED BY AT LEAST ONE CLASS IN COLD WEATHER.
- 4: FALSE. INEXPERIENCED PADDLERS USUALLY LACK PROPER EQUIPMENT AND PHYSICAL CONDITIONING TO DEAL WITH COLD CONDITIONS.

# DRESS ACCORDINGLY

- ALWAYS DRESS FOR THE WATER CONDITIONS FIRST, THEN OUTSIDE TEMPS
- AVOID COTTON CLOTHING
- USE THE 3 W'S TO STAY WARM AND DRY
  - 1)WICKING–SYNTHETIC LAYER THAT MOVES MOISTURE AWAY FROM BODY
  - 2)WARMTH–FLEECE, POLYPRO, AND WOOL ARE ALL EXCELLENT CHOICES; THEY INSULATE AND PROTECT, EVEN WHEN WET
  - 3)WEATHER–A WIND AND WATERPROOF OUTER LAYER WILL HELP KEEP YOU DRY AND WARM IN CHALLENGING CONDITIONS



# KNOW BEFORE YOU GO

- BE AWARE OF WEATHER FORECASTS AND PLAN YOUR TRIP ACCORDINGLY.
  - BE AWARE OF YOUR GROUP; KNOW THE PHYSICAL AND EMOTIONAL LIMITATIONS AND LOOK FOR CHANGES IN SUCH TO ADDRESS OR AVOID POTENTIAL PROBLEMS.
  - HAVE A BACKUP PLAN IN CASE OF EMERGENCIES.
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# KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

## THE MOST TYPICAL SYMPTOMS OF HYPOTHERMIA:

- SHIVERING
- IMPAIRED JUDGMENT
- CLUMSINESS
- LOSS OF DEXTERITY
- SLURRED SPEECH
- INWARD BEHAVIOR
- SHIVERING STOPS
- MUSCLE RIGIDITY
- UNCONSCIOUSNESS
- DEATH

# ASSESS THE SYMPTOMS

**MILD HYPOTHERMIA (VICTIM SHIVERING BUT COHERENT):**

**\*IF POSSIBLE, TAKE ACTION BEFORE THIS STAGE. YOU MAY STILL HAVE TIME TO EITHER STOP THE TRIP OR TAKE OUT EARLY. PLANNING FOR AN EARLY TAKE OUT AND/OR SHUTTLE HALF WAY PAYS DIVIDENDS.**

- **MOVE VICTIM TO PLACE OF WARMTH.**
- **REMOVE WET CLOTHING; GIVE WARM, SWEET DRINKS; NO ALCOHOL OR CAFFEINE.**
- **KEEP VICTIM WARM FOR SEVERAL HOURS.**

# SYMPTOMS CONTINUED

- **MODERATE HYPOTHERMIA (SHIVERING MAY DECREASE OR STOP):**
- VICTIM MAY SEEM IRRATIONAL WITH DETERIORATING COORDINATION.
- TREAT THE SAME AS ABOVE BUT NO DRINKS.
- VICTIM SHOULD BE KEPT LYING DOWN WITH TORSO, THIGHS, HEAD AND NECK COVERED WITH DRY CLOTHES, COATS OR BLANKETS TO STOP FURTHER HEAT LOSS.
- SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY.



# SYMPTOMS CONTINUED

- **SEVERE HYPOTHERMIA (SHIVERING MAY HAVE STOPPED):**
- VICTIM MAY RESIST HELP OR BE SEMICONSCIOUS OR UNCONSCIOUS.
- REMOVED FROM WATER, VICTIM MUST BE KEPT PRONE, ON BACK AND IMMOBILE. VICTIM MUST BE HANDLED GENTLY.
- COVER TORSO, THIGHS, HEAD AND NECK WITH DRY COVERS TO STOP FURTHER HEAT LOSS.
- ARMS AND LEGS MUST NOT BE STIMULATED IN ANY MANNER. COLD BLOOD IN EXTREMITIES THAT SUDDENLY RETURNS TO THE CORE MAY INDUCE CARDIAC ARREST.
- SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IMMEDIATELY.

# OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

- WINTERIZE YOUR GEAR—TEST HOW DRESSING FOR COLDER CONDITIONS AFFECTS YOUR OUTFITTING AND COMFORT WHILE PADDLING.
- PACK DRY CLOTHES, SPARE FOOD AND HYDRATING FLUIDS IN A DRY BAG AND CARRY WITH YOU.
- WEAR PROTECTIVE CLOTHING ON YOUR EXTREMITIES SUCH AS SKULL CAPS, GLOVES, POGIES, ETC...
- APPLYING A THIN LAYER OF VASELINE TO YOUR HANDS AND FACE CAN HELP REDUCE WIND BURN AND OFFER PROTECTION FROM COLD WATER.