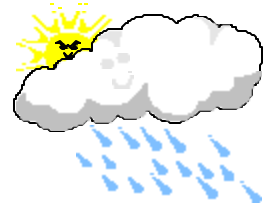


## The Right Stuff - Clothing and Keeping Dry

by

Greg Vincent

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As I write this in the Beaver Valley, I have just enjoyed six November days on the Georgian Trail from Meaford to Collingwood. November is just as it is supposed to be, temperatures a little above and a little below freezing, small amounts of sunshine, some wet snow and yes, it rained. I was dry and warm as I enjoyed this special part of Ontario beside Georgian Bay. Let me tell you how I did it.

### First Layer

Under it all, I switched the cotton undies for those made of a blend of polyester and a little lycra. This combination is our first step in keeping what is next to us dry and moving the perspiration out. The long sleeved shirt was again synthetic and I avoid turtle necks. I know with my scrawny neck I look better in a turtle neck but they bottle in the heat. If you must have a turtle neck find one with a zipper. That cotton turtle neck that you have will look great after the hike but will cause problems on the trail. The cotton fabric holds moisture like a sponge and keeps it right next to you, exactly where you do not want it.

### Second Layer

The next layer provides the warmth. For years we used a wool sweater; however, a fleece pullover works better. This material continues to transport our moisture away from us, dries quickly and comes in three weights. The 100 and 200 work well. The 300 is usually too heavy for hiking. For pants I opted for synthetic tights. They kept my legs cosy warm and were much more comfortable than pants. If you do choose pants, blue jeans are probably the most uncomfortable because of their fit (they look great on young cowboys) and once they are wet they will stay that way until long after the hike is over. Rip stop nylon pants work well and some even come with zip off legs - instant shorts.

### Third or Top Layer

The top layer is a water proof/breathable jacket without any insulation. Gore Tex is the best known of these materials that let the perspiration out at the same time as keeping the rain from getting in. You are going to have to pay more for this type of coat than you want to; however, I use mine all year round and not just for hiking.

### Rain Pants

Mine are Gore Tex and they sit at the bottom of my pack most of the time. My general rule is if it is raining when I start to hike I put them on. If it starts to rain on the hike, I decide then. The clothing that seems best suited for outdoor activity today is synthetic and is certainly a far cry from the polyester leisure suits of another era.



### Hats

Hiking hats are for protection and for sure not for fashion. Decide what you want protection from: the sun, something with a wide brim; the rain, something with a long "bill" to keep the rain off your specs; something for the cold will probably be wool or fleece.

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**Mitts**

Fleece mitts work well in the cold; whereas I use a synthetic glove for just cool days. I know that warm weather hiking will come again and all I'll need is a synthetic t-shirt and nylon shorts but until then the weather is not going to keep me from enjoying the sight of a deer walking on the trail ahead of me or the bright orange of the American Bittersweet.

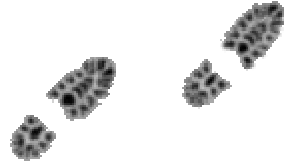
**Boots and Socks**

The boots were the same as I described in a previous "Right Stuff".

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Happy Dry Hiking,

Greg

**Note:**

This article is one in a series that appear in the Newsletters of the Grand Valley Trails Association. It has been reformatted for the GVTA website ( <http://www.gvta.on.ca> ). Greg is a very experienced hike leader and instructor. He has been a longtime member of the Bruce Trail Association and serves on the GVTA Board of Directors. In his spare time Greg teaches hiking and map and compass courses through the Adult and Continuing Education division of the Waterloo Region District School Board.