

# Looking at a few tips for dressing for

BY PHILLIP GENTRY  
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The last weeks of December reminded everyone that it can and does get cold during the winter in South Carolina.

Fortunately for Upstate residents, the ground is not covered with snow for the majority of the winter, and lakes and rivers do not freeze over. That means enjoying the great outdoors is always an option, whether you choose to do some small-game hunting, fishing, hiking or off-roading.

Knowing how and why to dress for the occasion is more than half the battle when taking to the outdoors during the winter. The typical South Carolina day may start off cold — even near or below freezing as the sun rises — then warm to the upper 40s, 50s or even 60s during the middle part of the day before cooling back down to near freezing temperatures when the sun goes down.

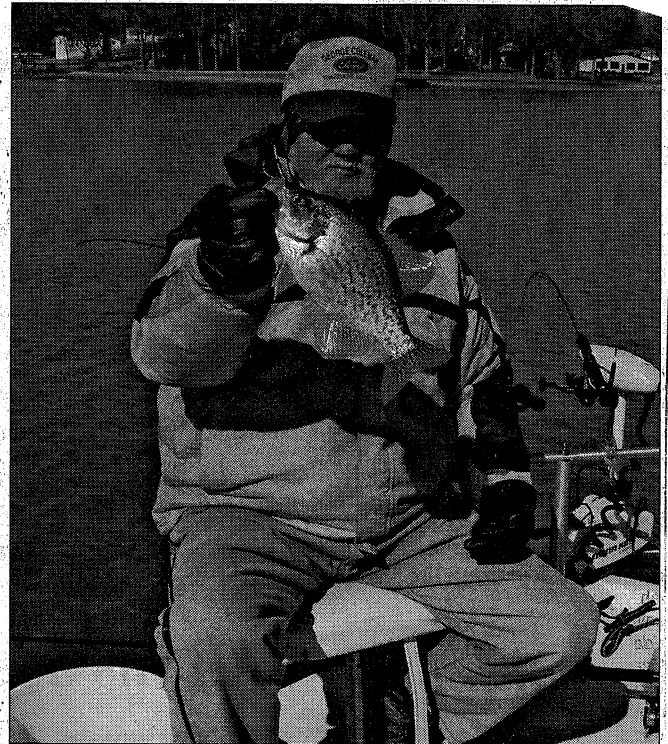
In order to dress ap-

propriately for a typical South Carolina winter day, dressing comfortably means dressing in layers, but the composition — and function — of those layers can make all the difference in the world. Here's a look at some dos and don'ts of staying warm outside this winter.

## Use several thinner layers rather than one or two thicker layers

Start with a base layer — known as long-johns, or long underwear for the rest of us. Space-age synthetics such as lycra, polypropylene or even silk are recognized as the best base layers available. All of these are lightweight and won't absorb moisture from inside or out.

A word here about cotton — commonly called the "death fabric" by severe weather outdoorsmen. Cotton holds water and is completely useless, even dangerous, when wet. Even in environments away from water, cotton can collect moisture from the body and



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**Plenty of outdoor pursuits can be enjoyed throughout the winter if you know how to dress for the occasion.**

compromise insulation ability.

## Dress for the appropriate activity

Dressing for an active

day of hiking will be different than dressing for a sedentary day of sitting still. Don't forget a pair of insulated boots. The lining should be wool or synthetic — not cotton.

## success during winter

Most cold-rated boots will have a thinsulate rating by brand name — 400 for moderate cold, 800 for more extreme.

Don't forget good socks. The same qualifications for underwear go for socks. Wool and fleece are popular, and be sure they don't restrict circulation in your feet.

Suggestions for mid-layer clothing include a wide array of fleece or wool garments — anything but a pair of cotton blue jeans or pants. Products from Patagonia and North Face are good choices, or if you prefer old school, a wool sweater. You want something that can be used as an outer layer when and if you take off the outer layer as the day warms.

Around water or in the rain, snow or mist, you'll want a water repellent outer layer — both upper and lower. The qualities to look for in a good outer layer garment is a waterproof shell that still allows air to circulate to let heat out. Boaters and anglers may consider investing in a Gore-Tex

severe weather suit that is designed for northern climates but offers great relief on cold, wet or windy days even in South Carolina's milder climate.

### Head gear is important

While it's a myth that the majority of body heat escapes through the head, covering any exposed body part helps retain heat. Fingers, hands and wrists are also very vulnerable to the cold, so keep them covered.

Mittens insulate better than gloves, as the fingers insulate each other better when packed together. A primary disadvantage in mittens is restricting the use of your individual fingers.

Hand warmers can also be useful and can be purchased at any outdoor or hunting store. Never use these as a substitute for gloves.

**PHILLIP GENTRY** is a freelance outdoor writer who has been writing a wide variety of outdoor articles across the Southeast since 2004.