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Winning the Cold War by [Eileen Portz-Shovlin](#)

Our three-climate layering system assures you ultimate victory-and warmth - in the fight against freeze. For nonrunners, dressing in winter is simple. You pile on as many clothes as it takes to stay warm. For runners, it isn't so simple. Too little clothing, and you'll never warm up on a run. Too much, and by mile 2, you'll be drenched in sweat, which can lead quickly to bone-chilling cold.

The trick is to dress warmly, but not too warmly. You need adequate bundling, but not so much that you limit your movement. And it all depends on the temperature and wind, as dressing for 45 degrees is a lot different than dressing for minus 10 degrees.

That's where our layering guide comes in. We're going to show you exactly what to wear in three different winter climates: moderate, cold and extremely cold. In this scheme, "moderate" means 40 to 60 degrees, "cold" means 10 to 40 degrees and "extremely cold" means 10 degrees and below.

Armed with this know-how and the proper running clothes, you'll run comfortably even on the coldest days. "Running in really cold temperatures can look pretty uncomfortable, but it usually feels just fine," says Goldman Miller, a resident of Kaltag, Alaska.

She ought to know. She trained for a marathon last winter in temperatures that occasionally reached 70 degrees below zero. The secret, of course, is layering. Doing a 15-mile run in 55 degrees below zero, Miller wore three long-sleeved shirts and a wind shell, two pairs of pants, a fleece hat with ear flaps, a neck gaiter and mittens. Seems like a lot of clothes, but the layers were light and breathable, so she was fine. Here's the basic plan: Always start with a base layer that's light and breathable. This is the most important piece for keeping you dry, comfortable and chill-free. A good, breathable base layer - a long-sleeved shirt and lightweight tights, for example - moves moisture away from the body so it can evaporate. It's important to wear synthetic, wicking materials rather than absorbent fabrics (such as cotton) that get wet and stay wet. For moderate winter temperatures, this one layer should be enough.

When the temperature dips below 40, add a second layer. This outer shell on the upper body will protect you from the cold, wind and snow yet will still allow perspiration to evaporate. One layer on the legs should be fine, though it may need to be somewhat heavier.

Even the best two-layer system won't keep you warm when the wind is howling and the temperature drops below zero. That's when you need a thermal layer between the base layer and the outer shell. This layer continues the moisture-transfer process but traps air to keep your body's natural heat from escaping.

On the following pages, our layering-system guide will help you run comfortably in three different winter climates.

Climate 1 Moderate

(40 - 60 degrees)

Within this temperature range, you'll normally need just one layer of clothing. If it's wet or windy, however, you may want to add a vest and some extras. Consider the following wardrobe:

BASE LAYER	SHELL	ESSENTIAL EXTRAS
Short-sleeved shirt and shorts	Water-resistant, windproof vest	Lightweight gloves
Lightweight long-sleeved shirt		Headband or hat
Lightweight tights		

Climate 2 Cold

(10 - 40 degrees)

Here's where you'll need two layers. If you're in a snowy area, you should consider investing in a water-resistant jacket. Overall, your wardrobe should include:

BASE LAYER	SHELL	ESSENTIAL EXTRAS
Long-sleeved shirt, Medium-weight tights, Wind pants, Vest	Water-resistant, windproof jacket	Gloves and mittens, Headband or hat

Climate 3 Extremely Cold

(10 degrees and below)

When the temps drop below 10 degrees, you need to be careful. No, your lungs won't freeze (a worn-out myth), but the rest of you might. Proper layering is key, so stock your gear closet with the following:

BASE LAYER	THERMAL	SHELL	ESSENTIAL EXTRAS
Long-sleeved shirt Long underwear	Fleece shirt Fleece or medium-weight tights	Water-resistant, windproof jacket Wind pants	Gloves and mittens Hat or balaclava Neck gaiter

Peak Comfort

To help take the guesswork out of your winter clothing strategy, remember these five guidelines:

1. LAYERING 1-2-3

Perspiration moves more easily through two thin layers than it does through one thick layer. A well-designed layering system keeps you warm and dry, yet still allows freedom of movement.

2. YOU GOTTA BREATHE

Breathable fabrics wick perspiration away from your skin and pass it on to the next layer. One wrong (i.e., nonbreathable) piece, and the layering system breaks down. Which translates to unpleasant running in heavy, damp clothing.

3. USE YOUR HEAD

You've always heard that you lose more than 50 percent of your body heat through your head. Well, you heard right, so keep your head and other extremities well covered when the temperature dips below 40 degrees.

4. FACE UP TO IT

On cold, windy days, remember to cover your face. Consider buying a neck gaiter or balaclava. If you have neither of these, you can always dab some Vaseline on your face.

5. DON'T OVERDO IT

More runners overdress than underdress. A good rule of thumb: you should feel chilly during the first mile or so of your run. If you feel toasty soon after heading out the door, you're probably going to get too hot and sweaty later on.