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# *A Texas Nature Kayaking Guide*

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## **Kayak Camping – Clothing**

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### Daytime Clothing

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Clothing should be appropriate for the climate and the time of year. The Texas Nature Kayaking Guides entitled Dress for Success – Warm Weather and Dress for Success – Cold Weather address appropriate clothing for day trips. For the most part, stay away from cotton. It takes a long time to dry and if the weather is cool, it can have a chilling impact on your outing. Long-sleeved shirts and long pants go a long way, even in the middle of summer, towards keeping mosquitoes at bay. Remember, dressing in shorts and short-sleeved shirts, or dressing with as little as the law will allow, may expose such a banquet to the mosquitoes that they will feel like they need to send you a thank you note. As the weather cools off, dress in layers so you can add or shed. For cold weather kayak camping consider silk or UnderArmor as a wicking layer, wool or polypropylene long handles, wool or synthetic outer clothes and finally a water resistant layer. Your PFD serves as an insulative vest. Pack coats and jackets a month before and a month after you think they might be needed. I can remember one trip where it was over 90 degrees one day, and I chipped ice out of my kayak the next morning. Remember to pack some gloves. Fingers can get very cold without them.

In south Texas many of us wear long-sleeved shirts and long pants year-round. They provide protection from the sun in summer and are usually cooler than short-sleeved shirts and short pants because they absorb sweat, and then it evaporates. This provides some cooling. Give it a try.

It is nice to change into dry clothes when you get off the water and make camp. If you are going to be camping for several days in an arid area, your paddling clothes will normally dry overnight. If you are in a humid area, decide before you leave home whether you are going to dress each morning in dry clothes or in damp clothes. After making that decision, pack accordingly. A towel comes in very handy when taking off wet clothes and replacing them with dry clothes.

### Nighttime Clothing

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Normally, nights are cooler than the day time and paddlers are not as active, so prepare your nighttime wardrobe accordingly. First, remove all wet clothing. If you crawl into your sleeping bag with wet cotton underwear on, you will probably not have to worry about waking up because you may not go to sleep due of the chilling effect. If temperatures are getting down into the 50s, consider wearing a stocking cap, heavy socks, and gloves to bed. Our heads, feet, and hands lose a lot of heat.

### Footwear

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Footwear that can get wet and will protect your feet is needed, but when you come into camp at night, it is nice to have a dry pair of shoes to put on. If you are going to be hiking, maybe those dry shoes should be a pair of substantial boots.

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## Headwear

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A hat or cap or even a Pith helmet will keep the top of your head from baking, but a cap will not protect your ears. There are head scarves called Buffs that can be adjusted so only your eyes show. There are also caps that have backdrops to protect the ears and neck. As the weather cools, the head gear should be designed to insulate your head from excessive loses of energy in the event you take a tumble into cold water.

## Other Gear

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Rain gear may be Frogg Toggs or the lighter and cheaper Gore-Tex, Plus. An old military surplus poncho will often come in handy around a kayak or a camp.

Dedicate a dry bag for clothes. To keep from having to buy several dry bags for clothes, lay out what you are planning on taking, add a margin for other things, and buy accordingly.