



With winter comes stormy grey skies, darker days, and scraping ice off your windscreen in the morning. If you're not one to allow a drizzle stop you from enjoying your weekend day trips, you're probably relying on your rain jacket to keep you nice and dry.

During a shower, you might notice that the water on your rain jacket is no longer 'beading off'. If you're seeing where some spots have 'wet through', the good news is that it's not quite ready for the donation bin! You likely just need to revive the DWR (Durable Water Repellence), which is easily done!

Oil or dirt build-up lessens a jacket's breathability and water repellence, so giving it a good clean should have it back to normal again. That said, before you chuck it in the washing machine with this week's dirty clothes, ensure you know how to give your garment the proper care it requires.

This blog outlines the steps for reviving your waterproof jacket. To 'bead off', read on!



If you're hiking in winter, you'll need to stay dry and warm in your rain jacket. Image: Sea to Summit

1. Check the Pockets, Loosen the Drawcords, and Zip it Up

From leftover trail mix, to tissues and other bits and pieces that you'd rather weren't washed in with your jacket - be sure to dig about in your pockets to retrieve them first. Loosen any drawcords on the hood or sleeves, and close all zippers.

2. Prepare Your Washing Machine

Clean out any leftover detergent or laundry powder in the machine tray. This step is important, as conventional detergent can actually be detrimental to your waterproof garment. In some instances, the ingredients actually absorb water instead of repelling it... which isn't the aim of the game here!



Make sure you use a specialised cleaner for maximum efficiency.

3. Add a Waterproof Textile Wash

Add the amount of specialised [Nikwax Tech Wash](#) (or similar product designed to clean Gore-tex, SympaTex, eVENT, Permatex, and other wet weather fabrics), according to the instructions.



4. Set to the Correct Cycle

Set the machine to the cycle and temperature stated on the care label.

5. Air- or Tumble-Dry

...and voila! Your jacket is ready for your next wintry adventure.



Once you've washed the jacket, the DWR coating should be rejuvenated.

More Tips for Hiking in the Rain

1. How Waterproof are Your Shoes?

If your boots are looking a little weather-beaten, test their performance by chucking them under the tap in the sink to ensure the water is still beading off. If they're not repelling water properly, you can follow our guide to waterproofing and conditioning your hiking boots [here](#).

Check the tread as well, to ensure you still have plenty of grip when hiking on wet ground and rocks.

2. Gaiters

If you're likely to be wading through creeks and rivers, [gaiters](#) will offer additional protection against moisture. It will also shield your shoes and legs from mud, which you're sure to encounter if hiking in winter.



Gaiters come in handy for keeping off rain and mud. Image: Sea to Summit

3. Lightweight Gear that Keeps the Head and Neck Warm

Once you warm up on the trail, that thick scarf or beanie is going to be too bulky and awkward to keep in your day pack. Save on space and weight by looking into a [Buff](#) instead. Wear it as a beanie or as a scarf ([plus more](#)) and, thanks to its moisture-wicking material, it dries very quickly if dampened.

4. Layer Your Clothing

Light, warm, and slim fitting layers are best for cold weather hiking, as they're easy to remove one by one when warm enough on the trail.

Generally, when it comes to thermals, merino wool is going to provide the best performance in cold conditions. This is because it regulates your body temperature well, is naturally odour-resistant, and layers well thanks to its lightweight qualities.



Layer your clothes to keep nice and warm when out and about. Image: Icebreaker

5. Keep a Spare Layer + Pair of Socks in your Daypack

Just in case all else fails, and you get caught out in a freak storm! Wet feet are also (literally) a pain, as the moisture creates friction in your shoes which can cause pretty nasty blisters. For more on blister care and prevention, check out this guide [here](#).

6. Keep Your Phone and Electronics in a Waterproof Case

A waterproof case could also be a dry sack, even if you are storing it inside your daypack. Your pack may be waterproof, but there's only so much you can do if your phone slips out of your hand or pocket and ends up in a puddle. A ziplock bag is also a cheap and effective option you could use in a pinch - but the downside is that you likely won't be able to effectively use the screen through the plastic.



Your phone isn't any use to you wet, so pop it in a waterproof case. Image: Sea to Summit

7. Keep Up the Energy and Fluids

When hiking in the cold, you probably won't notice dehydration as much as you would in warm conditions - but it's just as important as ever to stay on top of your fluid intake. Same goes for your energy levels, by fuelling up regularly with snacks.



Monitor your fluid intake, even though you may not feel as thirsty in the cold. Image: Sea to Summit



8. Don't go Without a Light Source (Even for a Day Hike)

If things don't go great, and you need to rest for longer or take shelter, a head torch is a must. There is less light during the day in winter, so it's recommended to have a light source in case you're delayed in any way. The same goes for carrying basic lightweight survival gear.

What are your tips for keeping dry and safe when hiking in winter?