

How to Use a Hypo-Wrap to Treat Hypothermia

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If you are in a situation, especially in the back country, where the weather is wintry, then hypothermia is always a danger. If someone is shivering uncontrollably and has the "umbles" -- mumbles, stumbles, fumbles, etc. -- then they are approaching stage 2 hypothermia, which means something needs to be done now. A hypo-wrap can help.

Difficulty: Easy

Instructions

Things You'll Need:

- Plastic tarp
- Blankets or sleeping bags
- Closed cell foam pad
- Warm water bottle

Make a hypo-wrap

1. 1

Lay out your plastic tarp. It should be big enough so that it can completely wrap the patient. Inside the plastic, place your blankets. If you have a closed cell foam pad or therma-rest, put that in the middle, with a sleeping bag or blankets on top.

2. 2

If the patient is wearing wet clothes they need to be taken off and warm, [dry](#) clothes put on. This is essential in that wet clothes will continue to sap energy and warmth from the body and are probably the main cause for the patient's hypothermia.

3. 3

Place the patient inside the sleeping bag or blankets, and close them in. Giving them a warm water bottle with hot liquid will also be very useful as a heat source.

4. 4

Wrap the plastic around the patient, who is still lying on the closed cell foam pad and sleeping bag/ blankets. There should not be any exposed portions of fabric from the sleeping bag. This hypo-wrap, utilizing plastic as a vapor and weather barrier, will speed up the warming process.

5. 5

Make sure that you have not cut off the patient's ability to breathe fresh air. If it starts to rain, then be creative with other resources, such as sticks or other foam pads, and try to create a plastic hood out of the plastic tarp. Continue to monitor the patient's vital signs, circulation, sensory and movements (CSMs). If the condition worsens, then more drastic measures need to be taken.

6. 6

After the patient has recovered and stabilized, bring the patient out of the hypo-wrap, but continue to monitor the patient closely, checking vitals and CSMs. Once a patient goes into second stage hypothermia, it is easy to relapse into it all over again.

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Tips & Warnings

- Getting experience and training in first aid is always a plus, especially if you are in a situation where you need to use a hypo-wrap, since chances are that you are not close to civilization. Additional first aid training would be a good thing to pack with you before you go.
- If someone is in second stage hypothermia and you are able to get the patient into a warm, dry, location quickly, make sure that the patient does not get worse as you go.

References

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- [Wilderness Medicine Handbook, 2007, WMI NOLS](#)
 - [WFR hypo-wrap for hypothermia](#)
 - [Nature Skills.com](#)
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Resources

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- [WebMD](#)
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