

## **Wear the Right Wet-Weather Walking Apparel**

Vibrant Life, March-April, 2002 by Karen Fritscher-Porter

Spring and summer showers, beware! You don't have to let rain defeat your walking goals. Judy Heller, a certified personal trainer, walk instructor, and racewalker, provided these tips to help you choose rainy-day walking apparel:

- \* Start with a base layer of clothing (including a sports bra and sock choice) that is breathable, reduces heat loss, and wicks moisture away from your skin to the outer layers of clothing. Choose synthetic fabrics containing microfleece, supplex, or polypropylene.

- \* For the midlayer, pick clothing designed to provide a dead-air space that traps body heat, thus insulating the body from the environment. This moisture-wicking, breathable fabric is usually a T-shirt, tank top, or singlet and tights. Expedition or lightweight fleece garments are a common insulator. Synthetic insulation offers a wide variety of functional sweaters, vests, and jackets.

- \* Outer-layer clothing should provide protection from wind and rain. These garments are made from waterproof, nonbreathable fabrics and are often vented to allow air circulation.

- \* The technical shells should be clothing of fabrics designed to provide protection from extreme wind, rain, and snow conditions. These garments are water-resistant, wind-resistant, windproof jackets or vests made from waterproof or water-resistant breathable fabric vented to allow air circulation. They often have drawstrings and seals to keep the weather out.

- \* Wear a hat and gloves.

- \* Also, consider the type of walking you will be doing. A trail walk or hike may call for different apparel than fitness or speed walking.

- \* Consider temperature and wind factors when choosing the amount of layers and type of clothing.

- \* Be wary of clothing that doesn't breathe. If your sweat doesn't evaporate, you will be wet. However, in some extreme wet-weather circumstances, such clothing options may not be a choice.

- \* Avoid cotton. It absorbs moisture without wicking it away from your body. Also, the fabric can rub, causing chafing, and it cools the body.

- \* Seek professional shoe advice, but of course look for ones that fit, meet biomechanical needs, and are flexible. When wet, remove insoles, place newspaper in the shoe, and dry away from heat.

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