

You can always make a lighter sleeping bag warmer by using blankets inside, but an extra heavy bag is miserable when you don't need all that insulation. Sleeping bags give you two choices: covered or uncovered. I would suggest you decide what the max and minimum weight is for the weather you expect to need it in, go for the lighter weight and use extra bedding inside it.

Sleeping bag "sheets" can be removed and washed a lot easier than washing the whole bag. Fleeceware (like sweat suits are made of) make excellent winter sheets, either for a sleeping bag or on your bed. Flannel sheets and "T-shirt knit" sheets would be other options. Sleeping bag sheets give you a third option: covered with the sheet but not with the sleeping bag - if you get too warm in the night.

To make sleeping bag sheets:

1) Get fabric at least 4 inches wider than your sleeping bag is when it's laid out flat, unzipped (not doubled over), and at least 10" longer than the bag is long (I prefer the sheets to be considerably longer than the bag so I can either lay my pillow on it or gather it up around my shoulders and neck. If you can't find fabric wide enough, get double the length.

For wide fabric:

2) Fold it in half along the length (so it is only half as wide now).

3) Stitch across one end and up the side. You might want to put a zipper on the side instead, but I don't like feeling the zipper against me; I'd rather wriggle into the sheet. You also might want to not stitch the side totally up to the open end to make it easier to get in. French seams work best (place **WRONG** sides of fabric together, stitch about ½ " wide seam; turn wrong side out so **RIGHT** sides are together and stitch a ¾ " to 1" wide seam. Top stitching the seam down really finishes it off nice.

4) Hem the open edge with a 3" to 4" doubled seam.

For narrower fabric that you had to buy double length of:

2) Fold one end of the fabric up to the other end, making it half as long

3) Stitch the sides the full length, unless you want to put a zipper in one side, or not stitch one side all the way up to the opening to make it easier to get into.

4) Hem the open edge with a 3" to 4" doubled seam.

These "cocoon" sheets are also great to use in bed on cold nights.

Some important info to sleeping warm in cold surroundings:

1) Have as much **UNDER** you as over you. Your body heat will warm up a mattress or bedding, but **NOT** the ground: Even a 1" foam pad under you will make a lot of difference.

2) Off the ground (air space under you) is much warmer than sleeping on the ground, even in a tent or on cement such as a patio slab. You can elevate a sleeping place by putting a plywood board or wood planks on bricks, boards or cans for "legs"; be sure to support the middle also. Just a couple inches elevation makes a big difference.

3) The less clothing you sleep in, the warmer you will be. Yup - it's true.

You'll usually be a lot warmer sleeping in your skivvies with heavy bedding than in a sweat suit with heavy bedding: there is more air space to heat up between you and the bedding than between you and your clothing.

4) Two people in bed together will sleep warmer than one alone. It's Biblical! (Ecclesiastes 4:11). The "less clothing" rule applies doubly here, as there is a greater exchange of body heat between the two people. Plan on young children sleeping with you in order to stay warm.

Along with this topic: have plenty of heavy sofa throws to snuggle up in if you live where winters are harsh.