



Welcome!

Indian summer is the term we apply to those warm, sunny days in autumn before old man winter starts his descent on the northern hemisphere. For paddlers, these halcyon days are a welcome occurrence. Hopefully, many of you have not put your kayaks away for the season and are taking advantage of the generous sunshine and pleasant weather.

For many, October marks the end of paddling season. In fact, October just marks the end of the warm-weather paddling season. Brisk air and chilly water is no reason to store your kayaks just yet (but when you are truly ready, Great Lakes Kayak can assist you with your storage needs!). Companies like Reed, Kokotat, NRS, and Chota have paddling gear designed to help you meet the cold-weather paddling season with confidence! As we stressed in Volume 3, if you plan to paddle over the next few weeks, when autumn colors will be at their peak, you must be prepared for the falling air and water temperatures.

Glenna O'Doul has written an article on cold-weather paddling this month titled *Chill Cheaters!* Her tips and insights are sure to help you in your quest for new adventures while boldering the cold!

Happy Paddling,
Heidi Holmberg

Chill Cheaters!

Glenna O'Doul

Autumn has fallen on us and we at Great Lakes Kayak would like to share with you some of our favorite things that keep us warm and toasty during our fall paddling season.

Hands and feet are probably the most vulnerable to wet and cold. For warm hands we love Chota's Stow-A-Way Flip Mitts. The Stow-A-Ways are a cross between a paddling glove and a pogie. The inner glove has 3/4 fingers to allow for all those small motor things you need to accomplish before you settle in for a long paddle. Once all your gear is secure, zippers are zipped, and spray skirts attached, you can flip the neoprene mitten over your fingers. If your hands are particularly chilly, the pocket of the mitt is generous enough to also accommodate hand warmers. These chemical crack packs are now available with a heat life of four to eight hours! It's a good idea to keep an extra supply of these little packs in your PFD.

For feet we love Chota's Mukluk Lights. These knee-high, paddle specific boots coupled with a pair of wool socks and/or Seal Waterproof Socks will keep your feet warm and dry in the coldest of water. The only criticism I have of these Mukluks is occasionally the quick release strap that tightens the neoprene gasket at the top of the boot will loosen up; if you repeatedly find yourself in water that is above the top of the boot, they will fill up with water. But this is why they are called paddling boots and not wading boots!

Between the hands and the feet we have the "Core". Fall is probably the most difficult season to dress for as far as paddling is concerned. The air temperature may plummet to a point where the water is warmer than the air! On the other hand, the air temperature could also be as warm as 85 degrees! The general rule of thumb is dress for immersion! Now, if you are paddling on a day when the water temperature is warmer than the air temperature you need to use a combined temperature. In the chart below are some combined temperature guidelines that will give you a place to start depending on your tolerance for cooler temperatures!

Wet Suits and Dry Suits

Many of you have asked what is what. A wet suit is usually made of neoprene or other like material. A wet suit traps a layer of water between you and it; your body warms the water thereby adding additional insulation. Theoretically, the pressure of the water on the outside of the suit traps the warmed water inside the suit. A wet suit will protect you from hypothermia in water temps to about 45°F, for up to 60 minutes in shallow water less than 10 meters or 33 feet.

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(Chill Cheaters! *continued*)

A dry suit or dry top is designed to seal out water and keep it away from your body. They come equipped with Latex Gaskets around the wrists and neck of the suit. Some less effective models have neoprene gaskets that will let some water enter and end up between your body and the suit. The suits or dry tops themselves are made of Gortex or a like product. Keep in mind a dry suit or dry top is designed to keep you dry, not necessarily warm. So it is important to layer appropriately with synthetic clothing under your "Dry Garment". Great Lakes Kayak Staff prefers the Kokatat Inner Core line of clothing for layering. NRS Hydrosilks are another good choice; however, we do feel that the Kokatat Inner Core has a higher insulation value. We also prefer the Kokatat Surf Skins over standard wet suits. Surf Skins boast the same insulation value as a 2 to 3mm wet suit; they are fleece lined for comfort and have a certain degree of water repellency.

Reed Chill Cheaters offer some fine options for those of you that may have a degree of Latex Sensitivity. I love their dry tops! Although getting them on and off is a challenge, once they are on they are extremely comfortable and watertight. Not to mention they are pretty sharp looking.

At Great Lakes Kayak we feel Kokatat is the only way to go if you are considering a dry suit. They have many options to fit almost everyone's budget, incredible customer service, and the quality and workmanship of their products is second to none.

Stay warm and safe this season. I hope to as well as I embark on my first journey to Alaska. The air temperature this morning in Denali is 20°F. My adventures will take me to Denali, the Kenai Peninsula, Prince William Sound, and the Chugach National Forest. I hope to have pictures and adventures to share with you when I return.

Happy and Safe Paddling!

Combined Air and Water Temperature Guidelines for Safe Cold Weather Paddling!

Air and Water Temperature Combined < 120 degrees:

YOU MUST WEAR WET SUIT!

Air and Water Temperature Combined < 100 degrees:

DRY SUIT RECOMMENDED!

Minimum Protection: Layered Synthetics (always remember: Cotton Kills) under Wet Suit and a Dry Top.

Air and Water Temperature Combined < 80 Degrees:

(Paddle with caution!)

YOU MUST WEAR A DRY SUIT!