

Winter survival: Ways to stay warm when the power goes out

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Don't wait until the next disaster before you get more food and water for your stockpile.

If you're worried about a winter power outage in your area, learn how to effectively stay warm without power so you can keep your family safe and comfortable after disaster strikes. (h/t to [TheSurvivalMom.com](https://www.TheSurvivalMom.com))

Here are different ways to [stay warm in winter during a power outage](#):

Stay warm using low-tech equipment

Try some of these options if you need to stay warm during a winter power outage:

Set up a tent in a room that is connected to a bathroom and spend time or sleep inside the tent.

If you don't own a tent, drape blankets over a large table in a makeshift tent for the whole family.

Make a "Buddy burner" to light up a room and provide a small amount of heat for several people.

A **DIY Buddy burner** can also be used to heat food indoors during a power outage.

To make a Buddy Burner, you will need:

- Corrugated cardboard
- A box cutter or sharp knife
- An empty and clean tuna can (or cat food can)
- Old crayons or broken candles
- An empty and clean soup can

Steps:

1. Peel the paper off the old crayons or break the candles into small chunks.
2. Take a small pot, fill it with several inches of water and heat it on the stove.
3. Place the wax from the crayons or candles into the soup can. Fill it only halfway or so.
4. Place the can with the wax into the hot water in the pot and keep the burner low. Let the water simmer so you have a makeshift double boiler. The water will heat and melt the wax, while the can prevents the wax from spilling into the water.
5. Ask someone to stir the melting wax with a twig from outside.
6. Use the box cutter or knife to carefully cut the corrugated cardboard into strips. Make sure the width of the strips is only slightly less than the depth of the tuna can. The cardboard should also be cut across the corrugation. This means along the long sides of each strip you should see through the small "tubes" of paper to the other side.
7. Place the cardboard in the tuna can and wrap the strips along the inner walls. Wear a glove to protect your hands because the inside rim of the can may be sharp.
8. Keep adding strips of cardboard, and keep going around in smaller circles until you fill the entire can with cardboard. You'll see nothing but a spiral of small holes if you look down into the can when it is filled.
9. The wax should be completely melted by now. Use an oven mitt because the can may be hot and carefully pour the melted wax into the tuna can. Fill all of the little holes in the cardboard. If you run out of wax before the tuna can is full, melt some more.
10. When you're done, set the Buddy burner aside to let the wax cool and harden.

To use the Buddy burner, light a match and use it to light the wax. Soon, you'll have a good flame rising up from the burner.

If you're going to cook using the Buddy burner, don't place your soup pot directly on the burner because this will smother the flame and get melted wax all over the bottom of the pot.

Instead, get a couple of small bricks or a few large rocks and bring them inside. Place the bricks on either side of the burner or put the rocks in a triangle around it so you have a steady place to rest the pot and suspend it above the flame.

The Buddy burner will burn long enough to let you make a pot of soup or boil water.

Extinguish the flame after you're done cooking by taking a square of aluminum foil and crimping it down over the top of the burner. You could also place a pot lid over the burner.

Leave doors and windows open so the fumes can escape to the outside and not accumulate inside your home.

Keep hand and feet warmers inside jacket pockets, gloves or shoes.

Use an indoor-safe portable stove to prepare small meals. Serving your family hot food can help boost morale.

If you have a fireplace, maintain a good-sized fire throughout the whole day. If you can't use the fireplace, close the damper tightly to block cold air from entering your home. You should also invest in a carbon monoxide (CO) detector with battery backup to protect your family from CO poisoning.

Make an alcohol stove from an Altoids tin or other metal tin box to keep your hands warm.

Wrap yourself in **one or more blankets**.

To stay warm if you have to move about, wrap fleece blankets around your waist or under your arms and secure them with safety pins. You can also use a blanket scarf or a shawl instead, but don't overload to the point where you excessively sweat because that will pull heat away from your body.

If you have a gas range, boil water and pour it into a hot water bottle. Hold the bottle to stay warm. If you have small children, wrap the bottle in a towel so they don't burn themselves.

Make an apple box stove to cook food and stay warm without electricity.

When it's time for bed, **sleep in the warmest sleeping bag you own**.

Put bricks or large rocks in your fireplace and heat them. Once the rocks are warm, remove them using tongs. Wrap the warm rocks in blankets to warm beds and yourself. (Related: [Prepper tips and tricks: How to stay warm in winter using cayenne peppers](#).)

Stay warm by wearing weather-appropriate clothing

These options are best if you have access to plenty of blankets and winter clothing.

Wear fleece-lined pants or fleece-lined tights. Fleece is a great material that will help you stay warm without electricity.

Wear wool socks and a wool cap the day whole day.

Wear layers of clothes, including long underwear.

Wear socks and shoes indoors and don't stand or rest your feet on a bare floor with tiles, concrete or other materials that conduct cold. Either wear socks or place your bare feet on a rug. This helps minimize conductive cooling. If you have bare floors and not enough rugs, put blankets or towels on the floor in areas where people usually walk and spend a lot of time.

Before winter hits, shop for cold-weather clothing in second-hand clothing stores. You can also purchase **cold-weather clothing** from outdoor or sporting goods stores and online stores.

How to stay warm without using electricity

Here are more **tips for staying warm when the power goes out**:

Cover uninsulated hardwood or vinyl floors with throw rugs or blankets. The estimated heat loss through floors is at least about 10 percent.

Hang heavy blankets over windows and exterior doors. Don't forget to hang blankets over glass sliding doors.

Spend most of the day and night inside **the warmest room in your house**. Close off the warm room to the rest of the house.

Cover all windows with bubble wrap as an insulator.

Block drafts under doors by cutting the legs off of a pair of old tights and stuffing socks into it. Lay the stuffed tights at the base of doors where you feel cold air coming through. Alternatively, you can buy door draft stoppers.

Prevent pipes from freezing and bursting by **wrapping vulnerable pipes with a heating cable**.

Since heat rises, it's best to **spend most of your time upstairs in a well-insulated room**.

Invest in an indoor safe radiant propane heater that has an oxygen depletion sensor and accidental tip-over safety shut-off. Your home should also have a propane and a CO detector.

Stay warm by changing locations

If you have to bug out, here are some tips that will help you stay warm as you change locations:

Stay in **your car with the heater on**. Keep in mind that this is a short-term solution. You should only do this while your car is parked in a well-ventilated garage or in an otherwise open area. Use this time to also charge your phones and electronics.

If things are bad, **check with your town or city to see if there are any public warming sites** in the area.

Other ways to stay warm without power

Here are other ways to stay warm after the power goes out:

Carry babies and toddlers in a sling or other baby carrier and help them stay warm using your body heat.

If you are well enough, **stay warm by exercising**. Make sure your exercise routine is vigorous enough to increase body heat, but not to the point where it makes you sweat too much, which is counterproductive when it is very cold.

Use your Buddy burner or any off-grid cooking method to **make a cup of hot tea, soup or stew**. The warm beverage will help warm you from within.

If you have pets like cats or dogs, make sure they also have winter clothes on and **cuddle with them to stay warm**.

Before disaster strikes this winter, **prepare your survival stockpile** and make sure your family can stay warm even without electricity.