

# Function AND Fashion- Keeping Warm in Cold Weather, Part 2

By Meira E. Schneider-Atik

**Myth:** Your winter clothes need to keep you warm and nothing else.

**Truth:** Your winter clothes can and should look good too.

Last month, I covered outerwear. I stand by what I said- the most important thing about your coat, boots, and other outerwear is that they have to protect you from the elements. However, the clothes that you wear underneath that outerwear can not only help keep you warm, but they can make you look better.

Most of us love the warm and cozy feel of heavy winter sweaters. Just be aware that they can also make you appear heavy and bulky. If you choose to wear a heavy winter sweater, make sure that it's fitted to your body and gives your torso and waist plenty of definition. This way, you won't drown in it. While classic neutrals are always good, there's nothing wrong with a sweater in a fun and flattering color and/or a fun and sophisticated print. As long as the colors flatter you, they can brighten up the winter doldrums.

However, a heavy winter sweater is not always the best way to go. Not only is it harder to fit and flatter, but it actually won't keep you as warm. Three lightweight layers trap your body heat better and thus keep you warmer. Plus, if those layers are fitted and flattering otherwise, they're much more flattering than one big heavy sweater because there's so much less bulk.

One other advantage of three lightweight tops is that you can play around with different color combinations. For myself, I usually prefer to go for blended colors- either colors from the same family or colors that sit near each other on the color wheel- because those combinations look rich and sophisticated and they flatter me. I also like pairing neutral tops with one bright color for contrast. But you need to try your own color combinations and see what works for you. If you like more contrast, there's nothing wrong with pairing a top in orange with another top in blue or a top in pink with another top in green. If the specific colors flatter you and the combination flatters and appeals to you, then you need to go with that.

Three layers is the maximum before your coat. More layers than that will restrict your movement and that can not only be uncomfortable, but it can lead to frostbite.

On the bottom, it's best to go with only slim-fitting layers underneath your skirts. Leggings and/or tights work great because they'll keep things slim and simple. Trousers are harder to wear because there's more fabric there. If the trousers are lightweight and very fitted at the waist and hips and they're under an A-line skirt, they can look very stylish. But if it's very cold out, you'll still need tights underneath.

Whether it's leggings, tights, or pants, it's best to avoid bright colors or prints because those draw attention downward. If you like colored tights and you're OK with the attention there, go for it, but a better choice is to place colors up on top near the face to draw attention there.

Speaking of tights, make sure that whenever you put on tights and socks that you wiggle and stretch your toes. You must be able to move your toes freely. Otherwise, you can impede circulation and risk frostbite there.

Skin care is important all year round, but winter cold can leave your skin dry and chapped and you need to adjust for that. Lip balm and moisturizer are necessary every day to prevent chapping. However, if your skin is already chapped, those items will only work if you exfoliate at night before using them. Exfoliating removes the dry, dead skin so that these things can penetrate. I love using plain, white, granulated sugar with a drop of my cleanser and a little water to scrub my face- it leaves my skin feeling polished and smooth even before I apply moisturizer. Then the moisturizer goes on and it feels amazing. A small, soft, flat-head toothbrush works great for scrubbing lips. Applying lip ointment right afterwards feels wonderful and makes a huge difference. It's best to do both of these at bedtime, especially since exfoliating and moisturizing your lips will leave them slicker than slick for a good few hours which means that lip color won't adhere. Exfoliating your face and your lips makes them a little more sensitive to the sun, but by letting the moisturizer penetrate overnight, everything has a chance to rejuvenate. Sunscreen is mandatory year-round and it's that much more crucial after exfoliating.

Speaking of lip color, creamy lipstick and/or gloss look and feel very good and provide the extra moisture you need in winter cold. It's best to stay away from most long-wearing lip colors because they get so dry and while lip balm helps with that, it also allows them to wear off faster. The same holds true for matte finish lip colors because they look dry and flat even if they're actually moisturizing.

We're all washing our hands more often now and that can leave us with chapped hands, and the winter cold and dryness only makes that worse. Hand creams and lotions are necessary but as with the face, they won't work well without exfoliating. I use granulated

sugar with a little water and I scrub my hands with that after I've done my other bedtime skin-care rituals. Then I rinse my hands, pat with a towel, and apply my favorite hand lotion. If my hands are seriously chapped, the lotion will sting for a minute or two as it goes in but then I feel the cooling sensation. And I see and feel a big difference in the morning.

Making it a priority to keep warm and protect your body from the winter cold doesn't have to come at a sacrifice to looking great. With a little bit of planning you can have both!