

## Ways to Keep Warm without Electricity by KI5LNM

This is advice taken from Melissa K. Norris' website with a few added bits from me. She is a fifth generation homesteader in Washington State. Her grandparents with other neighbors moved to Washington from Western North Carolina during the Great Depression. She lives up where it is not unusual to lose electricity several times during the winter. But they grow most of their own food and also heat their home with a wood stove, they are modern homesteaders back in the woods and know a thing or two about getting along.

1. **Body heat.** You might be surprised that if you just put a warm hat on and pull it down over your ears how you may immediately start feeling warmer. Also, if you can keep your core warm then your body can work to keep your extremities warm. The best fiber to keep warm is wool. Wool clothing can be expensive, may be itchy but it shouldn't be if done right and not with a rug wool or of that sort. Remember wool breaths and your synthetic fibers do not.
2. **Fireplaces. Wood stoves.** We have a fireplace that Mark got a fireplace insert for which with its blower is much more . We made sure to have quite a bit of wood ready to burn before this front hit. It is wonderful how it does warm things up and so our electric heat runs less. I do not like electric heat at all so love the fire, even if it means getting up a few times in the night to check it. Now Melissa heat's their home with a wood stove and not just any type of wood stove. This wood stove will look like most of what you are picturing in your minds but the top is smooth with two levels so when the power is out she can cook and keep food warm on the top of it. It warms their whole house and they do not have any other heating source.
3. **Layers.** Layers add insulation. One thing to keep in mind though is that the layer next to your body needs to be a fiber that will wick away sweat or water away from your skin. Wool is better than cotton in this case. Many who live in northern climates swear by wearing silk as your base layer. I can not speak to the synthetic and non-natural fibers. But when the layer next to your skin gets wet, it is harder for you body to keep you warm. Layer shirts, vests, sweaters, and even a coat if needed. I've found a wool skirt I have for reenacting is the key to keeping my legs warm. And as the temperatures fall even more some sweats under that with long socks is toasty. Then several layers on top finishing with a wool sweater bought in England that is thick and ever so warm, This can even get you through a quick run outside to fix something in a pasture with out the normal outdoor chore items. Of course, my hat is always on outside.
4. **Hot water bottle.** Funny but in reading and typing here, I remembered that we do have a nice hot water bottle in the airing cupboard in the bath. We bought it in England and used it often at night as we lived in homes that were hard to heat. Always a good investment as they don't cost much but work well. Ours is a nice rubber one that has a soft plush cloth outside cover. I need to get that out tonight.
5. **Keep your feet warm.** As Melissa says in her article - can she get a prize for saying wool the most times in one article? But yes, wool socks will go a long way to keeping those toes warm. A shepherdess I follow in Ontario is the queen of knowing good wool socks. It has been well below freezing for them and she does spend quite a bit of time outside even in these days.
6. **Keep your hands warm.** I think that Melissa and I agree on the fact that we do not like wearing gloves. Yet, if your fingers are freezing, they won't work right and headed in a wrong direction. Fingerless gloves with the flip top over are great if you must still work but can then cover the fingers quickly when done with fiddly work.
7. **Pocket Warmers.** These are a God send. I was given some at a winter reenactment event once and they do keep your hands warm. If you have gloves on, they can fit inside. Or put them in a pocket and wrap you hand around them. I do know if I was in cold weather for longer periods of time, I would definitely buy a big bag of these to have to hand. They are one time use, but also pretty cheap.
8. **Blankets.** Now in our house we have a variety of blankets that can cater to any need. We have wool ones. We have quilts. We have lighter ones that are made to wrap up in rather than sleep under. If you see me with any of them, you can probably guess the temperature. I have a couple thick flannel fleecy quilted ones that a childhood friend made me a couple years ago. I will tell you they are beyond warm. I should ask her sometime how many layers are in them. Remember you can layer blankets, and also be sure to sleep on top of flannel sheets or blankets as well to help with keeping your warmth in near you. It is rather amazing how flannel sheets help in winter. Plus they are soft and comfy.

9. Mummy bags. I bet we are happy we don't have weather like Melissa has that we would generally consider mummy bags. But they could be a good item to have around. They do trap body heat near you and some bags are guaranteed to keep you warm down to 0 degrees Fahrenheit.
10. Hot beverage. Now if you are like me, I get up in the morning and head straight to the counter and fill the electric kettle and get water boiling (if the power is out there are multiple ways to heat water but won't go into that here). Then while it is heating up, I decide which tea I want that morning. I do have about ten types I buy from a family business in Oregon so some mornings it may take the whole heating time to decide. But this can also include hot chocolate and for others coffee. But don't forget a good soup. This is where having a well stocked pantry is handy. Whether you can your own soups or buy them from the store, having quite a few at hand makes it easy to get something warming into your body. Also a good way to get liquids if you are having water issues.
11. Movement. Moving about in exercise or just making sure you aren't sitting still can help you warm up. Simple exercises like our old jumping jacks from our youth to raising your knees high repeatedly can start warming you up in five minutes.
12. Drafts. Check for drafts around windows and doors. We had a very drafty door in England that we took a quilt and sewed rings along the top and got a curtain rod across the door and hung up the quilt. It did make the hall darker but it sure made a difference in the temperature.
13. Go Out! If the electricity is out and push comes to shove. Go to a friends home, a shelter, a church, or a neighbors. In bad weather many places are open to help. Don't skip this if it will help. When we lived over in Spring, when the weather got cold the libraries were open for shelter. What better place to hang out that could be warmer than your home.

For more information, you can check out Melissa's website. She is one of the few that I follow closely and even have taken a few of her classes. Along this same line, she has posts on things to do for fun during power outages, cooking with cast iron outside, lighting for your home when the powers out, how to prepare for the winter storm, and many more. She has a blog, podcast, and youtube. Website is [www.melissaknorris.com](http://www.melissaknorris.com)