

## Preventing hypothermia - Rescue blanket

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Hypothermia is a major concern. It should be the red board throughout the entire care of the victim, always being careful to lose as little body heat as possible. This can be done by paying attention to several issues:

- Isolate the victim from cold touch surfaces such as the ground or a cold wall to lean against. Try to put a piece of clothing between these, a piece of cardboard, a blanket,... The back seat of a vehicle is an alternative but the limited space is a disadvantage
- Shield the victim from weather elements such as rain and wind, but also bright sun. After all, the sun will cause the victim to start sweating, which causes moisture loss and temperature loss
- If you need to open garments for care, close them as soon as possible. Only cut clothes if there is no other way, and cut in such a way that they can be closed to the maximum afterwards.
- Most body heat is lost through the head, up to 80%. So try to provide a cap or hat as soon as possible, or pull the victim's collar as high as possible. Pull socks over the victim's pant legs, fasten velcro strips to the wrists, make sure a scarf fits better, put legs together instead of apart,...
- Wet garments do not retain heat but draw heat away from the body. So try to replace them with something dry.

Extra clothing is always good, but you can also use an isothermal blanket. Such blankets are usually used incorrectly: in fact, they are of no use when draped on top of clothing like a cape.

- They serve to reflect body heat, and thus should be worn as close to the skin as possible.
- Still, try to leave the last layer of clothing under the isothermal blanket to prevent sweating, as this causes moisture loss. If impossible (e.g., someone wearing only one layer as outer clothing), then the blanket comes on bare skin, with the clothing over it.

One side of the isothermal blanket is silver, the other gold. Herewith the rule:

**"What you see, it does."**

- If you **see** gold, the yellow of the sunlight, your victim is getting heat
- Do you **see** silver, the white of the snow, you cool the victim

## THE TECHNIQUE

1. Place a knot in the middle of the long side of the blanket or at a corner (the corner is often the easiest)



2. Pull the knot through the T-shirt, sweater,... up to the collar. Make it a hood (warn the victim that this makes a lot of noise, have him hold the blanket to the head if possible).  
Make sure the back is covered, and push the surplus of the blanket up against the rear. Now have the victim lie down and lift the rump. You can now pull the surplus of the blanket down and use it to wrap as much of the thorax as possible and possibly make a pampier with it. Head and thorax are priority packing, legs are not.

