



by John Huston

We love winter!!! The silent season, where everything is a bit harder to do. We feel our society is afraid of winter and that most people don't actually experience winter. Most people hustle from warm box to warm box and remain outside only as long as absolutely needed. Thus most people's bodies never have a chance or time to make a few to physiologically adaptations to the cold.

Most people think that traveling or being in winter means one is cold all the time. This is not true.

Winter travelers have just learned how to be warm in the cold. In extreme situations, such as polar expeditions we do spend some time being cold, but in those cases that normally happens when we forget to eat and drink enough, are improperly dressed or are in extreme weather conditions.

How cold we are on expedition is largely determined by our discipline and self care. The same is true for anyone going outside in the winter.

With a little exposure to the cold the human body increases circulation a bit and improves in it's ability to stay warm in cold temperatures. Over a period of years, speaking from personal

experience here, the body makes these adaptations more quickly and the changes seem to last longer after winter is over. Perhaps more importantly the mind becomes accustomed to being in the cold.

I tend to overheat if I workout in temperatures above 80°F. While skiing to the South Pole last December and January, one of my biggest issues was not trying to stay warm, but rather trying to keep from sweating. The work required to pull a heavy sled can produce a lot of perspiration. How one regulates this moisture temperature and energy management.

Fortunately, Antarctica is one of the driest places on earth and moisture evaporates quite quickly. I was most comfortable skiing when the thermometer read -30°F, at this temperature I did not sweat very much. It is hard to imagine, but the body can generate a lot of heat when it is well fed, hydrated and working hard.

That whole expedition my clothing layers consisted of a double layer long underwear shirt and my wind jacket or anorak.

On the Arctic Ocean we will spend most of our time dressed similarly. However, since the Arctic Ocean is one of the most humid places on earth, regulating moisture takes is way more challenging than doing so in Antarctica.

Happy Holidays everybody and get out there for a nice long walk in the winter weather!