

5. COLD, COLD, COLD

Exposure to Cold

While heat-related illness is your most likely environmental hazard, ironically it is also possible to experience physical deterioration as a result of cold body temperatures. The Coastrek 50km and 100km events will require at least some night (and possibly all-night!) trekking, and in the latter case this will be after an arduous 14 hrs of day walking. A combination of fatigue, lack of good food, cold night temperatures, and maybe even a southerly rain-squall can combine to make you dangerously cold.

Shivering and goose-bumps are symptoms of mild hypothermia and are signs that your body is not performing at its best. More violent shivering and stumbling are signs that a dangerous level of body-core cooling is developing.

How do I avoid becoming cold?

The key to maintaining an efficient and comfortable temperature is to keep a 'food-fire' burning inside you, to put on warm clothing before losing heat, and to prevent clothes and skin from becoming wet. Try these tips:

- Organise your food so that you can regularly eat and drink nutritious snacks and liquids.
- Wool and synthetic layers provide more heat insulation than do cotton clothes so make these your underlayers.
- A lightweight wool hat and neck gaitor will minimise heat-loss from the parts of your body most prone to losing heat.
- A rain coat will be essential in case of cold rain, and if necessary will provide an excellent barrier against cold wind.

