

First off, layer your clothing. This is not a unique idea, but it suits dragon boat paddling to a "T". It's important to remember that any of this stuff can be taken off if you get too warm, but if you've left it at home or in your car, you're out of luck. Start with base layers that remain warm when wet. Actually, just about everything you wear should be warm-when-wet due to the nature of the sport. Dry-fit type materials and wool do this well.

Secondly, protect your extremities. An uncovered head will bleed off a lot of your body heat, and hands and feet should be protected as they lose heat quickly and will generally leave you feeling miserable once they get too cold.

Toque:

If there's a piece of a paddling gear that screams "Canadian" louder than this, I don't know of it. Keep your head warm, and you'll feel much better.

Gloves:

Your hands will get wet - 100% guaranteed. The water during the early months is also very, very cold, so investing in set of gloves, or a pogey (a paddling mitt that attaches to the paddle itself) is a really good idea. Look for gloves made of neoprene or thinsulate. You definitely want to protect the hand that will hit the water, but the top hand isn't as important. You might want to consider splitting a pair of gloves between right siders and left siders to cut down the cost. Dish gloves can work, but they will only keep your hands dry, not warm. Wear these over top of a thin pair of winter gloves if you want to try this option.



EXAMPLES
[MEC Catch Neoprene Gloves \(Unisex\)](#)
\$20.00 CAD



[MEC CycliPad 3mm Gloves \(Unisex\)](#)
\$16.00 CAD

Footwear:

Old running shoes, neoprene booties, aquasocks, or old boots can all work. If they're not waterproof or well insulated, try wearing plastic bags sealed with elastic bands over top of them. It looks silly, but it works surprisingly well.

EXAMPLE
[MEC CFP Lowrider Paddling \(Unisex\)](#) \$18.00 CAD



Socks:

Go with neoprene, wool, or some other fabric that insulates when wet. Cotton is almost useless.

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T-shirt:

Again, Lifa is good. You can also get away with a 50/50 cotton/polyester t-shirt under a Lifa long sleeve. Some of the other new fabrics that have been showing up in team uniforms, like suplex or duplex t-shirts also make good first or second layers. A neoprene vest can also help to insulate against the coldest weather.

Thermal wear (long sleeve shirt):

There is a saying in the outdoor sportsworld, "Cotton kills." So go with a fabric that is at least 50% polyester, or go full bore high tech like polypropylene. Lifa's are great, as are Hot Chilly's or Regatta Sport Coolmax.

Jacket:

Waterproof or water resistant material is preferred, gore-tex, etc. Some people even go for kayak style jackets. However, the fabric should be breathable, otherwise you can wind up sweaty and uncomfortable underneath it. For this reason rubber raincoats are not recommended. Try not to wear a jacket that is too floppy, as it can interfere with the person behind you. Having "pit zips" is helpful (running room jacket).

Life Jacket:

When practicing or paddling in most of the regattas, life jackets are available to use.

**EXAMPLES****Serratus Solo PFD (Unisex)****\$63.00 CAD Reduced To \$50.00**

Made in Canada

**Serratus FloForm****PFD (Unisex)****\$69.00 CAD****Reduced To \$55.00****Pants:**

Running tights work well to keep the legs warm. You can wear these underneath waterproof or water resistant pants. Hip waders are not necessary, but add a certain Red Green flair.

Product Number: 4007-945

Sunglasses:

Maybe not necessary for now, but it is a good idea if you wear contact lenses or if you sit behind someone that is especially "splashy". Put them on a safety cord or your brand new Oakley's could join the growing collection of paddler eyewear at the bottom of the lake.

Where to find this stuff?

There are any number of sporting goods stores/websites out there where you can buy these items. In Toronto, Mountain Equipment Co-op that has a great selection of paddling gear, including neoprene everything; gloves, boots, shirts, socks, as well as kayak shirts/jackets, running wear, cycling wear, etc. Lifa's, Hot Chilly's or other thermal wear can be found at most Ski shops or sporting goods stores. Regatta Sport also has some good selections and they are ubiquitous at most regattas, or can be ordered through their website. Canadian Tire is carrying more of this sort of equipment now too.

<http://www.paddlesup.ca/coldweather.html> for more information and links (original reference for the above information)

Mountain Equipment Co-op (MEC) has a lot of choices with regards to paddling gear. The website is www.mec.ca You can order on-line and have it delivered to your home.

STRETCHING TIPS

<http://www.paddlesup.ca/workout/stretching.html>