

HOW TO WASH DOWN-INSULATED ITEMS

PREWASH INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Pretreat as needed with a watered-down OxyClean-type solution, or spray with warm water then scrub gently using a stiff bristle brush.
- 2 Wrap zipper sliders in heavy fabric held in place with a rubber band. This prevents the zipper slider from being damaged or from heating up enough to melt lightweight fabric.
- 3 Cover hook Velcro with a strip of loop Velcro so it doesn't damage mesh or lightweight fabric during wash.
- 4 Open all zippers so the insides of sleeping bags and pockets get washed, too—we know about the granola bar crumbs in there.
- 5 Secure all long straps or pieces of cordage so they don't wrap around other items and cause damage.

WASH INSTRUCTIONS

- 1 Set the washer to cold and load it up (don't overload; you'll get a more thorough wash if everything has room to move).
- 2 Add an insulation-specific wash like those offered by Nikwax, Atsko, Grangers, or Gear Aid. Use a down wash for down and a tech wash for synthetics and keep in mind these washes aren't optimized for smells or stains—they're formulated to make insulation perform well.
- 3 If you're not sure that all the soap has been rinsed out (one of the main reasons people get bad results while washing at home is insufficient rinsing—home washing machines are often too small to effectively rinse a large sleeping bag), add an extra rinse cycle, or run the load through a second cycle with no soap.
- 4 Dry in a large dryer (laundromat dryers are your best bet for larger items because they provide the space necessary to tumble dry), and dry multiple down items at once if you can. Use low or no heat—overdrying is hard on gear. You've probably been told to add tennis balls, or periodically stop the dryer to work out clumps with your hands. You can do this, but clumpy insulation will loft up on its own as it dries completely.
- 5 Keep an eye out for loose down, which may indicate a tear (repair before you continue drying). Keep drying until all clumps or dampness are gone.

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