

OUTDOORS+

What I want for Christmas



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I saw something on the Internet that could have been very well written by me. It was the beginning of a letter to Santa, and it summed up my year perfectly.



Tips from the Posse

By Mark Rackay

It started out, “Dear Santa, I have been extra good this year, well, pretty good. Ok, I tried really hard, well I tried, I didn’t get arrested. It wasn’t my fault. Oh, never mind, I will just buy my own stuff.”

My wife says I am the hardest person to buy presents for. I admit that I am very picky, especially when it comes to my tools and outdoor equipment. But my pickiness comes with many years of experience, and a few scars acquired along the way.

I will not use cheap Taiwan ratchet wrenches and sockets. They break when you apply pressure, which results in my fingers and knuckles getting smashed. Meanwhile, I defoliate the shrubbery with colorful expressions while my wife hurries away the grandkids with her hands over their ears.

The same holds true for outdoor equipment. Just what I need is a cheap knock off piece of necessary gear to fail in an emergency. With that said, I try to buy the best I can afford for anything hunting and outdoor related. I will try and offer a few gift suggestions for the outdoor person in your life. I apologize in advance for the price of some of these items but if you have been extra good this year...well maybe.

First would be a few things from Yeti. The Yeti Rambler bottle has a screw top lid. You can fill this with ice water, and it will stay cold all day in the hot sun. This works great in the vehicle or the ATV on those long summer play days in the mountains. This retails for \$49.99.

While you are in the Yeti section,

look at the Yeti Rambler Tumbler. It will keep your coffee hot for hours and drinks cold for most of the day in the summer. Comes with a spill proof lid for \$24.99.

If the budget allows it, the Yeti soft sided Hopper 40 cooler, for \$219.99, is fantastic. It can be a carry-on for air travel, crammed into an ATV, or thrown in the back of a truck, as this cooler is indestructible. Besides, a cooler is an essential for everyone who plays outdoors.

Murdoch’s has a large selection of Yeti items on display and Yeti is a quality product that is almost indestructible.

Under Armour is a line of clothing that works very well for anything outdoors. I really like the long underwear for material composition and warmth. It comes in ratings of 2.0, 3.0 and 4.0 depending on how extreme the cold weather will be.

Under Armour also has a complete line of Cold Gear base layer clothing, jackets and fleeces and all of them work well for everything from hiking, snowmobiling, hunting, skiing and snowshoeing. Prices start around \$20 and go up over a couple hundred, depending on what you are looking for. Locally, Target, Big 5 and Murdoch’s carry Under Armour products.

The next item I would suggest is a quality set of packable rain gear. Rain gear has saved my bacon on so many excursions that I have lost count. If you stick with lightweight and packable, it will go with you everywhere, and be there when you need it.

I chose the Cabela’s brand of Space Rain. It comes in a variety of camo patterns, completely waterproof, quiet and packs to a bundle the size of your fist. The pants retail for \$69.99 and the jacket lists at \$89.99. My set is around six years old now. I have carried and used it extensively and it has held up very well.

On any Christmas list, you always put a couple things that are probably out of budgetary reach. These things always serve to make the other requests seem to not be so unreasonable, and with that thought in mind, I will throw a pitch for something on the



Yeti makes a full line of products that would be welcome under any outdoor person’s tree. (Submitted photo/Mark Rackay)

upper end in here.

One thing everyone outdoors person wants and needs is a pair of quality binoculars. Like most people, I have owned a dozen pair of cheaper binoculars over my lifetime, all of which have moved down the road.

The cheaper ones just don’t show the detail or have proper light gathering ability. Ask anyone who guides for a living, and spends many hours glassing, what they prefer. More often than not, the choice would be Swarovski.

The Swarovski 10x42 EL is a perfect choice. They have more options than a new car and come with a lifetime warranty. This full size pair sells for \$2599.00.

If lighter weight is a concern, look at the Swarovski CL pocket Binoculars. Yes, they will fit in a pocket but they do not compromise performance. The small pair sells for \$819.00.

All Swarovski optics are made in Austria and they have a service center in the U.S. You are going to have to travel to Grand Junction to find them at Cabela’s or the Sportsman’s Warehouse. Most folks put off buying quality glass for many years, but the comment I always hear when they

finally buy it is “Why did I wait so long.”

The last thing I would suggest is to stop off at Kinikin Processing on the way home and pick up a selection of the jerky and meat sticks. You can chose from elk, bison and beef but all make great trail snacks. High in protein and very packable, they go along on just about all our trips outdoors. While there, you might grab a snack tray to have around over the holidays

Most of my funding requests for outdoor equipment die a quick death in financial subcommittee as my wife uses here “pocket veto” to kill the horse in the starting gate. Let’s hope my wife reads this column and gets the “hint.” Merry Christmas to all of you and I hope 2018 is a great year outdoors for you.

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TIP OF THE WEEK

HOW TO TURN YOUR HOME INTO A RETREAT

Include the five senses. Light a candle, then snuggle into a plush robe and slippers.

Release blocked energy. Try a simple yoga move called the seated cat/cow position.

Hone your breathing technique. Sit quietly for a few moments, taking full-body, deep breaths.



DRAFTY HOME

GET READY FOR WINTER

The best way to stay warm when it’s cold outside is to ensure your home and its building envelope — the thermal barrier between the interior of a home and the exterior environment — is properly sealed.

To maintain a well-sealed building envelope check for air leaks around windows, doors, pipes, vents and cracks/gaps where walls meet ceilings and floors.

— Brandpoint



PIXABAY

How to winterize

Tips to keep your home healthy, safe when the temp drops

Winterizing your home often seems to conflict with the healthful lifestyle you aspire to — potentially impairing your indoor air quality and increasing fire hazards and other safety issues.

By Laura Firzst
Networkx

Winterizing your home often seems to conflict with the healthful lifestyle you aspire to — potentially impairing your indoor air quality and increasing fire hazards and other safety issues. So how do you get your home ready for winter and at the same time keep yourself and your family healthy?

Try eco-friendly insulation

Here’s a basic principle for winterizing the house: Keep icy air out of your home by insulating your attic, basement, and/or crawl-space. Stay healthy by choosing insulation materials like cellulose, that don’t offgas volatile organic compounds (VOCs), which may be harmful to human health.

Have your HVAC inspected

As winter approaches, make sure your furnace, gas fireplace, or other home heating system is running efficiently and safely. Call in an HVAC professional for a tune-up and any necessary repairs.

Find a better furnace filter

Keep your furnace running efficiently while you breathe freer by always having a fresh furnace filter in place. Did you know you can install a permanent filter to eliminate wasteful disposables? Then just clean the filter once a month throughout the season of heavy furnace use. If you suffer from

allergies, wear a breathing mask while doing so.

Clean your ductwork

Winterize your home by having dust, pet hair, and mold removed from your ductwork. This keeps your HVAC system from circulating unhealthy contaminants.

Take care of your chimney

Clean your flue of any creosote and debris before you start using your fireplace or woodstove this winter. This is important for 2 health-related reasons: 1) reducing fire hazard and 2) safeguarding indoor air quality. When you’re not using the chimney, stop icy drafts with a chimney balloon or chimney sheep.

Improve indoor air quality

With your home sealed up tight in winter, indoor air quality is likely to suffer ... unless you take measures to ventilate your home. A heat recovery ventilation system can be a very practical tool to winterize your home in colder climates; it is designed to admit fresh air and exhaust stale indoor air without wasting heat.

Install a smoke detector, carbon monoxide alarm.

These two simple, affordable items are must-have safety devices for your home, especially in winter. If you already have them

installed, good for you. Don’t just stop there, though — check the batteries today. Then test the unit itself and replace if necessary.

Take care with a generator

Power outages can be disastrous in winter, particularly if your household includes cold-sensitive individuals such as small children, invalids, or elderly members. An important part of winterizing your house might be purchasing an electrical generator to back up your electrical supply. Install outdoors, at least 20 feet away from the building.

Have a fire safety plan

Crackling log fires, glowing candles, and holiday lights are all a part of winter cheer. Unfortunately, they are also winter fire hazards. Prepare your home for a safe and cozy season — make a fire safety plan with your family before an emergency happens. Buy a fire extinguisher and make sure you know exactly how to use it, fast and effectively.

— Laura Firzst writes for networkx.com.

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