

#AskPaulKirtley Episode 92 Transcript

[00:00:00] In this episode of Ask Paul Kirtley, we are going to talk about how to tell when and how to sharpen, sleep systems, how they vary for me, and there's a specific question which I'll get into: Keeping your outer shell garments performing well. What's the rationale for a smaller bushcraft knife? And there's a specific question there which we'll get into the more details of, and wearing your waterproofs to bed.

[00:00:51] Welcome, welcome to episode 92 of Ask Paul Kirtley. Great to be back with more answers to your questions. Keep those questions coming in! Just go to my site paulkirtley.co.uk, click on the Ask Paul Kirtley bit in the menu just. says Ask Paul Kirtley, click on the orange button, record a voice message. Easy peasy! And I look forward to receiving your questions, which I'll do my best to We've got a bunch of good questions here, and we'll kick off straight away. Let's have a look, in no particular order. These are all voicemail questions. Let's go!

[00:01:30] *Hi Paul, with all these tech washes and reproofings for every kind of garment and fabric, have you got any top tips for keeping outdoor clothes in good condition, particularly outer garments and waterproof trousers? Cheers!*

[00:01:49] Okay, thank you, Jerry. Good question, probably relevant to pretty much anyone watching this. and listening to this. How do we keep our outer garments in good condition, performing well, particularly waterproof clothing? You mentioned waterproof trousers, but I would suggest it probably applies even more to waterproof jackets. Okay, so you mentioned reproofing. Yeah, reproofing is important when the initial treatment of the garment starts to wear off, and you start to see the garment wetting out; then that's definitely a time to reproof it. And I would use a recognised reproofing agent. I use Nikwax TX Direct, which is the wash-in for my waterproof garments. And I use the tech wash to wash the garment beforehand. And that's important It's important not to use your regular washing machine detergent to wash your waterproof clothing because it won't work well then with the reproofing agent.

[00:03:01] You need to wash with a traditional soap-type product like your old soap flakes or one of these specific liquids that you can buy from, say, Nikwax. As I say, I use tech wash. And what you're also best doing is just flushing your washing machine through first, so there's no residue of detergent or clothing conditioner in the machine before you then introduce your outdoor garments. So what that means for me is I tend to batch the washing and reproofing of some. of my waterproof clothing as well as bivvy bags so that I don't waste a bunch of water and a bunch of time. So I'll take the drawer out of the washing machine, I'll give that a rinse, make sure there's no residue in there, I'll run a rinse cycle, just a quick rinse cycle in the washing machine just to make sure it's flushed through.

[00:03:54] And then I'll start cleaning and reproofing and cleaning and reproofing and cleaning and reproofing a whole bunch of stuff, and then that's done for the next six months or whatever that I need to have it done. A good time for me is just before I start teaching courses in the spring, and then kind of at the end of my course season in the autumn. Those are kind of two junctures when I look to do bivvy bags, waterproof clothing. Of course, if they need work in between, I'll do that, but I'll try and batch them rather than just do them at random intervals. So there's a couple of tips just to start off with. What I would also recommend, you know, within that, I see a lot of people treating their clothing not that well.

[00:04:38] You want to keep your garments, whether it's insulated garments or shell garments or waterproof jackets, you want to keep them as clean as possible. I see people dragging them around, leaving them on the floor, sitting on them at lunchtime. Kneeling on them while they're bow drilling. All this kind of... that's not what it's for. It's to keep you dry when it's raining. It's to keep the wind off when it's windy. You want to keep that thing in really good condition, so that means keeping it clean. Dirty clothes don't work as well as clean clothes, whether that's insulation, whether it's waterproofing, whatever it is, they won't work as well as if they're dirty. So keep them clean. Also, you want to keep them free of damage. So, you know, don't be kneeling on them.

[00:05:28] Don't be using them as a sit mat. Don't be dragging them around on the floor. Don't be just throwing them down on the floor when you're not wearing them. Take care of them. Put them back in your day sack. Hang them over a hanging line. Hang it on a peg on a tree, whatever, and use it for its particular purpose. I'm a little rougher with waterproof trousers because they are going to get kicked around. They are going to get dirty. But frankly, wet legs are less important than a wet torso. You don't want your core becoming cold and damp. You can cope with legs becoming a little bit wet. The main thing I want to try and avoid on really wet days is water running down my legs into my.

[00:06:08] And that's an important thing for me. So, as long as my waterproof trousers are doing that, I'm reasonably happy if I have to wear waterproof trousers. Or you can also use gaiters to help with that job as well. But your shell garments, you really want to keep them in good condition. You want to be careful that you're not too close to fires and getting sparks on them. You want to be careful when you're carrying stuff and working in the Even with really tough outdoor garments, you want to just make sure that you're being careful with them. And if you do get damage, make sure you fix it as quickly as you can. Put a patch on a hole so things don't continue to rip. Make sure they're not leaking. If any tape starts to come away from the seams. replace the tape on the seams. Those sorts of things. Just try and keep your garments.

[00:07:25] That's about it. Just a note on cleaning: don't over clean them either, because you know you're going to get some wear and tear on your garment putting it in the washing machine and it going around, around, around. Um, and so, clean it when you need to. Try and keep it clean in the field. Don't wash it too often, because then you're also maybe putting some wear and tear on the garment, maybe making making the seams, uh, the

seam tapes, uh, come off more quickly than they would do otherwise. And on that point, with the with the the seam sealing and the taping, you need. to wash those garments really quite cool because if you wash them with warm water, hot water, the glue on the seam tape will start to release and your seam tape will come off as well, so you really don't want to be washing any higher than about 40 degrees C, and the reproofing agents often require you to wash at 30 degrees C and follow those instructions.

[00:08:20]so that's that's everything that I do. I don't do anything more complicated than that. all right, um sleep systems.

[00:08:30]*hi Paul, Dave here. um I've just spent the night in the woods listening to your um global, watching your global bushcraft um symposium talk, which is very interesting, you're obviously spending lots of nights in different conditions all around Europe and Norway and Canada and Australia and places I'm just really wondering about your um sleep systems and whether you go traditional in in minus conditions and use uh reindeer hides as sleep mats to high R ratings or um just really a big broad question about different conditions um what your how you change your sleep systems okay thank you*

[00:09:14]cool good to hear from you Dave uh good question as you say it's quite ended up being quite a broad one there um okay where to start um

[00:09:28]First off I would say I'm quite particular about some things but I'm also not fussy, and that might sound contradictory, but what I mean is that I hear some people who say I would never sleep in anything other than a hammock. I get it that some people have back issues and whatnot, so they're wedded to one system more than the other. I get that, okay? But aside from that, I hear some people say I'd never sleep in anything other than a hammock. I hear some people say I would only ever sleep on the floor. I hate hammocks and various shades in between that, and then you get people with very strong opinions about other things, and often without really having tried the other or tried them in a variety of different.

[00:10:19]conditions so I just caveat that I'm agnostic really in that sense I'm not very wedded to one or the other in any particular dimension. I would say I generally prefer a flat bed than a than a than a hammock-shaped bed, and I know some people say you can sleep flat in a hammock. I have colleagues who sleep in hammocks, and they find it's better for back than sleeping on the ground. That's all fine, and I probably just find it less faff being on the ground, but I also don't mind being in a hammock, and when I need to be in a hammock, I'm very glad to be in a hammock. So when I don't want to be on the ground because there's spiders, leeches. Snakes, scorpions, etc.

[00:11:10]I'm very happy to be in a hammock. That's when, for me, hammocks make the most sense. Also, if it's stinking hot and there's, you get a bit of a benefit of a cool breeze blowing through in and, you know, around a hammock. In hot conditions, hammocks are quite nice. And also, if the ground is just really difficult, you know, rocky ground, steep

ground, etc hammocks have got some advantages there. So, I do use hammocks, and I tend to use them in hotter climates, more tropical climates, when there's a reason not to be on the ground. Otherwise, I just find it more convenient being on the ground, and I don't have a problem sleeping. flat my bed at home is flat my floor when I sleep on the floor when I sleep on a friend's living room floor where the thermal rest is flat.

[00:12:06] If I can find a flat spot in the woods, I'm happy. So then, in terms of sleep systems more generally, I tend to try and use a similar system whether it's warm or cold and just scale it up or down. So, you know, my core system that I use in the woods a lot of the time in the UK is when I'm working particularly is I'll put a foam mat down first, and just to protect my thermo rest. Particularly where I work here in in East Sussex, there's a lot of sweet chestnut, there's a lot of spines, and they can put holes in thermo. rests and they can put holes in the bottom of bivvy bags, so I'll put an old-fashioned closed-cell foam mat down first.

[00:12:53] That also just gives me a nice warm thing to kneel on; it gives everything else grip, it's not sliding around. Then I use an old MOD British Army bivvy bag, and I have a three-season sleeping bag in there and a Therm-a-Rest of some description in there and that, and a tarp over the top just set up in a regular kind of a configuration, like jungle if you like, and that's it. I use that a lot of the year. Now, if it's in the shoulder seasons where it's a bit colder, I might upgrade to a four-season bag, but it could still be the same. otherwise, I've got the option of using I've got an old Dutch Army bivvy bag with a central zip.

[00:13:49] I tend to use that in snowy conditions in the north woods because it's it's got much more room in it. It's got the top zip, so it it's you can lay it open without pulling the top as you sit up and get dressed and whatnot. But I do sometimes use that in the winter in the UK, and it will accommodate a four-season bag, a five-season bag, a sleeping bag. But otherwise, the rest of the system fairly similar, and then and the same if for bivvyng. If I'm in a snow hole, if I'm in a Quincy, you know, it's the same bag: sleeping mat, thermo rest inside, sleeping. Bag inside Dutch Army bag with a zip on the outside, so it's the same; it's the same basic system.

[00:14:36] I do tend to use a silk sleeping bag liner, not necessarily in the really, really cold conditions because I've got thermals on. Typically, I'll be sleeping in a base layer of a fine merino, and that helps keep the sleeping bag clean. It's also another warm layer inside the sleeping bag, but like four season, three season, two season, I'll use a silk liner to help keep the sleeping bag clean. It also gives me the option of, kind of, particularly in the summer, like at the moment, it's quite warm; it's quite overcast today, but we've had some very warm. weather this spring and summer and even with a two season bag, which is all I've got with me at the moment, it's quite warm overnight sometimes,

[00:15:19] and you can just leave the sleeping bag open, have the silk liner over you, it's just like having just a sheet on at home, which is in some ways much more pleasant than just sleeping with a bivvy bag over you, and even without the bivvy bag, even more so just

having the silk liner, it's like having a sheet on rather than the duvet, if you like, and a lot of people prefer that; I think I prefer it, but equally, the main reason I use a silk liner is it in the colder conditions, so, say, in this on the spay. in October when we get cold conditions, the silk liner helps me stay warm. Often, I'm in a four-season bag then,

[00:17:00]but that's the main thing that I add on the inside sleeping bag that's appropriate for the season. If I'm just knocking around the woods here in the UK, I will often use a synthetic bag, particularly in the summer: a three-season synthetic bag. I can put that in the washing machine at home. If I'm journeying, I always use down bags, even on canoe trips, because they're just lighter for the warmth. They compress down when you're packing them smaller than a synthetic bag, and particularly for winter trips, winter synthetic. Sleeping bags are very large, and I prefer using down bags. I find them more comfortable, but the weight and the bulk are the main reasons I prefer a down bag. For those reasons, I scale up or down two, three, four, five season Bivvy bag.

[00:17:54]If it's a two season bag and I'm going really light, I might take the Snugpak Special Forces bivvy bag, which is a very lightweight bivvy bag, three quarter length sleeping mat, and very lightweight tarp. I've done a video on that before; I'll link to it. That's kind of a really lightweight summer setup. It does work. It is protective. You can put the tarp up and down. It's warm enough. That two season sleeping. bag I've got is ridiculously warm for how it's like there's nothing there but it keeps you warm on cool nights even in the summer. And it's great for not very much weight. And then I've got everything up to heavier weight bivvy bag five season sleeping bag for the cold in the winter.

[00:18:41]As for blankets and reindeer skins you asked about, I have used reindeer skins in Northern Sweden more on sort of static camps. I have to say where we're putting a tent teepee up for a few days, getting the stove running, getting some boughs in, maybe some reindeer skins as well. That can be very nice. One of my things with reindeer skins is that you end up with reindeer hair in everything, even with the skins that are tanned for outside use, only as opposed to the tourist skins that are tanned for indoor use, with the soft backing, hard almost like rawhide back skins that you tend to get for use outdoors. The hairs come off, they get stuck into clothing, they get into everything.

[00:19:32]They're comfortable to sit on and don't get me they've got their place and they're traditional, but I don't choose to use them. Typically, if I've got a choice of something else, I'll use something else. But for having around in a kind of basic larvae-type shelter, they're great. You feel the warmth immediately. and particularly if you've got any structures made out of. I've used them in quinzhes as well, and they are remarkable. When you put those down before you put your other sleeping kit down, they make a big difference. And just for sitting on, rather than sitting on cold, compacted snow, they just make a huge difference. So they do have their value, but it's not something I really go out of my way to try and use.

[00:20:18]And they're quite hard to pack if you're making journeys. They take a lot of room up compared to some modern equipment. Wool blankets, I've got more of a soft spot for.

You know, your traditional wool blanket. And I do have a number. of Hudson's Bay blankets, point blankets got a three and a half, point four, point and a six pointer. For me, the four points are good size to wrap myself up in, in a kind of burrito. And that's very pleasant by the fire, you know, in the autumn or the spring. I'm just trying to think. I've got a Belgian Army blanket which is not wool. It's a kind of synthetic, but that's great. I use that for some things as well, and that only cost about 20 pounds or something, 25 pounds.

[00:21:12] And it's very big. Sometimes just use that as a kind of, I put a builder's top down. This is inside my tent teepee. On one side, I store kit. And then on the other side, this is just in the UK in kind of crappy, kind of autumn spring conditions. One side I'll put kit, so it's like just the bare ground. And on the other side I'll put like a builder's top down. And then I'll put this Belgian Army blanket on top, and it's like a carpet; it's wonderful. And then I'll have my sleeping mat and sleeping bag on top of that. That's also something that I really enjoy, just having that warm space. And you can kind of get your boots off and get onto the carpet, sit down, and just relax, read a book or what have you know, once you start getting those dark nights in the.

[00:22:03] And then on our intermediate course, we use the old British Army kind of. bed in the barracks blankets the gray blankets for students to use on the courses. And I've used those as well, and they work nicely as well. Again, you know, you build a shelter, you build an improvised bed, you've got your blanket, you've got your fire in the middle of the. That's actually a really nice, simple way of being out as well. So I do enjoy that. But if I'm journeying, I tend to go with a, you know, bivvy bag, down sleeping bag, thermal rest, silk sleeping bag liner, and scale some of those components to the season and the conditions, everything from sort of very lightweight two season up to, you know, heavyweight five season conditions.

[00:22:58] Oh, that was a long answer. Hopefully, that was a broad question and a long answer. Hopefully, there was some value in there for you and for other people as well. Right? Let's keep going. How to tell when and how to sharpen?

[00:23:17] *Hi Paul, it's Dave Cook here from Bushscout. I was wondering, um, how can you tell how to sharpen a? I have an amazing Ben Alford Nomad, as an. It feels sharp, but when I'm looking at the blade, um, I can see light reflecting from it. Does that indicate that it's too far gone to use a strop, or could I just use a strop? Um, and I just wondered whether there were different grades of when to do these different things. Um, so, um, yeah, if you're able to answer, that would be really useful. Thank you very much. Cheers. Bye.*

[00:24:01] Hi Dave. That's a good question. Um, it's quite a lot wrapped up in that, but um, the first thing I would say is, yeah, the two main ways of telling whether your knife needs sharpening or not in my book, uh, feeling it, running your thumb across the edge, and just feeling how the edge picks up on the thumbprint, not putting too much pressure on, not running your thumb along the edge, and looking at it under decent light to see whether or not there's any light reflecting off. And as you've mentioned, um, if there's light reflecting

off, that means there's flat spots or that. The edge is bent over a little bit.

[00:24:46] The finer the edge, the less surface area that there is there, which means that the less light is going to reflect off it. So the first thing I would suggest is that if you you said it feels sharp, but it looks like there's light reflecting off it, maybe you need to adjust your perception of what feels sharp, because if there's light shining off it, you will be able to feel that compared to where it's sharper unless there's light reflecting off the whole thing. Um, certainly with my knives, if I spot something, and I do this with my students a lot on the on the elementary courses in particular, um, one of the things they have to do is get good at sharpening on that course and we'll check it and you can look down their knives and I can look down my knives as well.

[00:25:37] If I've been using it, I can see there's a bit of a flat spot there; I can see light shining off it, and I can run my finger along. I can tell it's sharp there; I wouldn't want to press very hard. And then you get to the bit where the flat spot is and you you can feel that it's not as aggressive. It's not catching your thumb as much and it doesn't feel as sharp. So, to me, there's a definite correlation between that visual cue and that cue with your thumb. The exception to that is if your hands are wet, um, either because of, you know, being out in the in the wet paddling, or just being out in the rain, or you've been sharpening your knife on a water stone.

[00:26:11] It's much harder to feel that, um, catch because your your your skin is softer. Um, so your hands need to be dry to get that catch. But otherwise, you should be spotting those spot those areas that are reflecting light by feeling as well. Um, I don't like the scrape your, your, um, thumbnail test. I sharpen knives enough and I test my students' knives enough that I'd have no thumbnail left if I use that. Um, also, um, I'm not particularly hairy anyway, and shaving hairs off my arm is not. really something that I do to test. Um, either I know people do do that, but the main ones that are um repeatable as many times as you like a feeling and looking. And so that's how I tell what you then do about it.

[00:27:02] Depends how far gone the knife is. Um, by all means, um first port of call should probably be stropping, and you don't need to have, if it's out in the field, you don't need to have um complicated equipment with you. You don't need to have paddle strops. You don't need to have stropping paste. All you need is a leather belt; actually, a canvas belt, as long as it doesn't have metal studs or anything in it, you know, something that you can run. you can trail the edge along just to try and drag it back into um alignment. If it's been folded over very slightly, just being able to drag it back into alignment a little bit um can can do the world of good. And often you can finish a job, you know.

[00:27:43] So if I'm carving a spoon with my regular bushcraft knife and it starts to feel like it's a little bit blunt, I'll just take my belt off, give it a good strop, and I can often finish the job before I need to fully sharpen the knife. So by all means, have a look at you know stropping first. And if you're not sure whether or not stropping is going to be enough, there's one way to find out: just do it and see. Yeah. If you feel like it's not as sharp as I'd like it to

be, give it a strop, see if it's then doing a better job, um, without having to to to sharpen it. Cause of course, once you bring the knife to a you're taking metal off the bevel, which, over many years, will wear the knife down.

[00:28:23] So you don't want to be going right back to abrasive stones or, you know, very coarse stones unless you really need to. And I generally don't go all the way back to a very coarse stone unless the knife, for some reason, has become very blunt. Um, you know, accidentally typically, you know, I've, you know, it's been run on bone or something, and it's really taken the edge off it. Or, you know, you've been cutting through hairs on a skin or something. Um, and it's really taken the edge off it. Or, um, you've you've stropped it quite a few times and it's become a bit rounded. Um, but even then, I would probably start with an intermediate stone. Um,

[00:30:00] edge, which can ultimately be quite hard to to sharpen. So, you know, it's often best to go back to a slightly more abrasive stone. Don't do too much work with it. Bring those bevels right back to a nice, fine edge and then refine the kind of sawtoothiness of the edge by going on to the fine stone, spending more time on that and just refining the edge and then stropping to to to to bring it to a nice fine edge, and then there's there's an argument for or against running it slightly off angle on a ceramic rod to give it a very fine secondary bevel, to give the edge retention a better chance. It depends on the steel you're using, and I used to do that with 01 knives.

[00:30:43] I don't like, I tend to use RWL 34 stainless knives these days, and I don't ever do that with the ceramic rod. The edge retention on the RWL 34 is much better than the 01, so it depends what steel you're using as well, but typically strop it first, see if that does the job. If it doesn't do the job, or it doesn't last long enough, then go back to a stone maybe start on the fine stone if the if it's not that bad and then you know bring it back up to spec, strop it, use the knife, but occasionally take it back to a slightly more coarse stone and bring it back up via the finer stone, and then strop it and you'll be good. In the field, I just I take the same principle.

[00:31:38] I just use a DC4 diamond ceramic stone from Falcon. Even same principle though, that's that is my field sharpening kit: a DC4 and a leather belt. I use the fancy stones back at home, there of course. Which way are we going? That way, staying on the knife theme for a moment

[00:32:04] *Hi Paul in one of your more recent videos on knife grips, you are holding A smaller belt knife or a small fixed blade on the online elementary course, which I can't recommend enough; it really is one of the best investments I've made. It is so helpful in getting me up to speed on a number of bushcraft-related topics. Well, anyway, in the course, you're explaining a system in which you are carrying a larger belt knife and a smaller pocket knife. This makes sense in my eyes. So my question is: what makes, or what is the rationale behind the PK2? Or, more generically, why would one would want to have a smaller belt knife? What gap does it fill? I mean, three knives sounds a little bit like overkill*

to me. I hope you would like to take the time and explain this. Regards.

[00:32:56] Okay, cool. So, yeah, good question, Mike. Mike's another student of mine on the online elementary. If you're interested in that online course, really serious foundational bushcraft course, very extensive and detailed, I'll link to that below. I probably should never have called elementary. To a lot of people, elementary sounds basic and simple. It's foundational, it's cornerstone, it's more than worth the money, frankly.

[00:33:34] Anybody who's in it knows that the difficulty is always explaining it to people who are not in it. But you get a 30-day money-back guarantee, so if you really hate it and it doesn't work for you no loss. But as for Mike's question, you can stay with a Mora Companion HD for a long time. You might want to change the I might make a video about that at some point, about some options there. But generally, those knives are very good, and they are that typical, you know, drop point, flat beveled, Scandi grind, gradual curve, very comfortable grip, about the width of your palm. Great for bushcraft, woodcraft. And I think then the question is, if you're pairing something like that with a pocket knife, that makes perfect sense.

[00:34:31] Even if you're pairing something slightly bigger, like a PK 1 or a Heli Nord or those types of knives with a pocket knife that makes sense. So the question specifically was about PK 2, I think. And this is a smaller knife, it's a smaller knife than the PK 1, and it's a smaller knife, it's a shorter blade than a Woodlaw, it's a shorter blade than a Mora Companion. It's a little bit shorter than that recommended kind of width of your hand. And so I think Mike's been asking, do we need this, or are you saying you should carry this and a PK 1 or a Mora and a pocket knife? And no, I'm not saying this.

[00:35:15] The PK 1 is a serious wilderness knife, and I will make, if it's not out already, I think it will be out already, there's a separate video on the PK 1, so I'm not going to go over that there. In brief, the PK 2 is meant to be potentially a companion knife for that. So, rather than having a folding blade pocket knife, maybe you've got in a winter situation, and it's just one iteration. You know, if you think about what the Sami used to have, they would often have a smock, outer belt, heavy knife on that for chopping branches and whatnot. And then, on their inner garments, they would have a lighter knife that they would still have on them at all times, including in the in the larvae and what have you, even if the heavy outer belt and smock wasn't on them, including the heavier knife.

[00:36:13] And so, those two knives can fit. those roles like a heavier knife for the outside, a lighter knife just to have on you, but not a pocket knife, so not a folding TK 4 or something like that because the blade isn't much different in size. It's a little bit bigger on the PK 2, but not much. The other use case is you don't have the bigger knife, okay? So you're now using a half axe, you're using a Scandinavian forest axe or similar, and that is the tool that you're going to do all the heavy work with, and then you just need a smaller knife for fine work. And yes, you could have a pocket knife for that, but you might instead want a smaller, lighter belt knife for that, or in addition like you might have a really small pen knife, and

then you have a have a fixed blade that isn't going to close on your fingers.

[00:37:03] You know, you could have a very small Swiss army knife, you know, with a few other little bits and pieces on it that are useful, or you might have a multi-tool, which you know, as good as multi-tools like Leathermans are, the blades on them are not great. So you might be carrying a multi-tool for various jobs, you know, snipping snare wire, you know, doing various other things, you know, fixing ski bindings, you know, fixing things on canoes. You know, you've got a screwdriver on there, you've got pliers, you know, other things but the blade's not great and you've got an axe you've got a multi tool there's a space for a small knife there as well potentially so that's another use case.

[00:37:42] And then the other use case that I often use the PK2 for is full winter conditions so I've got a three quarter length axe I can do all of the felling, splitting, sectioning, limbing, etc etc., etc. bucking all of those words whichever combination of those words you want to use. I can do all the work I need to produce the firewood and maybe cut bows, etc. with the axe, the three quarter length axe, and then all the fine work that I might need to do whether it's splitting down little splints. or you know making feather sticks or what have you, I can do with the PK2. The other thing about something like a PK2 and any knives with blades of that kind, you know, wood laws have got, you know, blade tip shapes about that shape as well.

[00:38:32] Unlike the PK1, unlike something like a Mora Garberg, unlike a Heli Nord, for example, these small knives are basically good little crafting knives. I can make a netting needle with this, and it's quite difficult to make a netting needle with a PK1, for example. So this is a good little crafting knife; like if I have to take a, if I'm going, like if I want to craft stuff, a half-axe, and this is a really good combination. and it's a bit more heavy-duty than a Mora 110, or I forget the numbers of those knives, the little Mora wood carving knives. I've got, I own them, and I use them, and I really like them. But, and they're great for carving, but if you just want one knife that's going to do a lot of things, including carving and netting, needles and spoons and whatnot, and you've got an axe, this is a good combination with the axe.

[00:39:31] And then in full winter conditions, bigger axe for bigger jobs, more processing, and you've still got a small knife on you that's still robust, that you can still do really good feather sticks with, that you can still do all of those other. jobs with you can you know you can process it you know game with it you can you can take fillets off a fish with it it's not ideal but you know better off with a filleting you know but if you catch a small pike when you're ice fishing or something and you want to take the sides off, chuck it in a pan. you want to catch a snowshoe hare, you want to, you know, make a few little cuts on it and this knife is great for that.

[00:40:08] you've got all your little woodcraft jobs covered as well and you're not having to carry as much weight as a larger belt knife. so I'm not suggesting that you need all of these things on you all the time that's the thing you know having Some flexibility in your toolkit is

where it's at. So being able to say, do I want my hatchet? Do I want my half axe? Do I want my three quarter axe? Do I want just my pen knife? Do I want my Swiss Army knife that's got a locking blade? Do I want my multi-tool, my Leatherman? Do I want to take my Mora Companion? Do I want to take my Woodlaw? Do I want to take my PK 2, my PK 1?

[00:40:47] You're not going to take all of those with you all of the time, but it's like based on experience and how much use you think they're going to get and the different jobs you're going to do on a particular trip. Don't forget I, you know, sometimes I work, you know, I work a lot in the UK, but I also work in, you know, I do journeys in Scandinavia. I work in Canada in the winter, and the summer I do some work in Australia. I visit Africa, and I need a range of different tools. Sometimes I'm doing certain things; sometimes I'm doing other things. So, hopefully, that's not too confusing an answer. The PK 2 marries well with a heavier knife when you want a lighter knife, and that's just your two tools.

[00:41:30] The PK 2 marries well with a half axe when you're going to do your, you know, in these sorts of summer conditions where you can do your heavy jobs, you know, with your axe. You can do the rough carving, the splitting, etc with your half axe. got your small knife for doing fine jobs. You can make netting needles, etc., etc. or full winter conditions. It's nice if you're using a three-quarter axe. Then maybe you only need a PK 2 as well for any small jobs, but equally you might want a PK 1 on the outside and a PK 2, or you might want a heavy knife and a multi-tool and an axe. You know, so I'm not saying you need all of them; you just need to choose the ones, fill in the gaps, and have a little bit of overlap, and that's it.

[00:42:18] And I'll probably make a separate video about the PK 2 at some point because people have been asking for that. I had a prototype for a long time; these pictures of the prototype. that are in the Wilderness Axe Skills book, but they are in production. Now and then, we do have the finalized version, so I will probably do a separate video on that. All right, last question: wearing your waterproofs to bed.

Hey Paul, I had a question about wearing your waterproofs to bed. I have an ultralight backpacking book that says to wear all of your clothes to bed, including your rain gear, so that it traps in more heat and you can take a lighter weight sleeping bag. But then I've heard other people say that if you wear your your waterproofs to bed, that it can trap in moisture and then make your other layers damp and ultimately make you colder than you would have been otherwise. I was wondering what your experience is with this. Thanks.

Yeah, there are some interesting ideas out in the sort of lightweight, ultra-lightweight backpacking hiking world, and they don't always tally with the bushcraft wilderness expeditioning world. There are some, it's always useful insights when you look at things in different ways, but equally it depends on what type of terrain you're in, what type of weather conditions you're going to come across, and what's the weather going to be like the next day.

[00:43:58] You know, what's the nighttime temperature going to be versus the daytime temperature, and so I would say generally I wouldn't plan to wear my waterproofs in my sleeping kit. I would just take a slightly heavier sleeping bag. I mean, I'm trying to be polite here. Um, you're generally either on your feet or lying down; like that's where you spend most of your time when you're outdoors. Um, you're either moving or you're sleeping, yeah, and there's a bit of camp stuff in between, and particularly when you're hiking. Um, so having a good sleep is super important for rest, so that you can complete your journey properly, you know? So being warm and comfortable is important. Now you're if the choice is taking a two season bag and wearing all your clothes versus taking a three season bag and being comfortable in your in your underwear and a t-shirt.

[00:45:15] I would always do the latter, frankly, because a two season bag is going to weigh not that much less than a three season down bag. A good quality three season down bag doesn't weigh much more than a two season bag. Now, where I might wear clothes extra clothing in bed is where I expected a two season bag to do the job. And if you have an unusually cold night, then yeah, maybe put some extra clothes on. And there is always the argument, and it is particularly important in the winter. like when I take students to winter conditions I will tell them to bring a bag, a sleeping bag that is appropriate for the conditions or they can they can rent one, um, but have a bag that's appropriate for the conditions and sleep in it with as little clothing on as possible, um, but don't take off your your long johns and your first layer of, um, wool, your merino.

[00:46:18] So you're going to have underwear and then you're going to have long johns and a a merino top on and then make sure that you're using the sleeping bag as well as possible. Make sure that you're using the baffles correctly. Make sure that you are, um, using the hood if you get you know put a hat on by all means, and that can make a difference, or a balaclava if you're outside in a hat. And then try and be warm with just that stuff on, because the more clothing you put on, you do emit moisture all the time, and your temperature can go up and down, particularly if you've sort of later in the evening, you go to you.

[00:47:03] You kind of wake up not quite with the meat sweats, but you can wake up quite warm, and you can sweat um into your clothing, especially if you go to bed with too much on. It's better to take like an outer jacket and put it over the top of your, uh, of your sleeping bag like as a duvet, like as a quilt or what you can. do if you've got um if you've got like cold, you know, legs or cold feet or something, you can even kind of fasten the jacket up and pull it over as an extra kind of outer layer around the outside of the sleeping bag as long as it doesn't compress the the the inner um insulation.

[00:47:43] But I generally try not to wear, as a default, not to wear clothing too much clothing inside sleeping bags because it you can potentially get too warm. Um, now obviously the put the lower the performance of the outer bag, maybe you do need to put clothing on, but you can still put moisture into it, and um then the next day if it's a cold morning then you're out. in the cold with clothing that's a bit damp and that's when you can

feel really cold. Um, whether that's, you know, whether that's winter conditions or whether that's, you know, fall, spring, summer conditions, whatever. Um, so I would generally try and avoid that. Um, and the other reason I would avoid planning to sleep in my waterproofs is if you need your waterproofs for their primary purpose, which is keeping you dry in rainstorms and, you know, persistent rain.

[00:48:41] Like I have spent enough time in pissing wet rain to know what my even really good quality waterproofs, whether I'm in the hills and I've got really good mountain jacket. really good mountain waterproofs or I'm on a canoe trip, um, or I'm in a camp in the woods and I'm running courses, and it's been raining all day. I know how damp my outer garments feel by the end of the day. There is absolutely no way I'm going to want to crawl into my crispy dry down sleeping bag with wet waterproofs on, um, to try and stay dry, to try and stay warm overnight. I'm just going to make my sleeping bag wet, and that then is not going to work properly. Okay, so I think, you know, if you're walking in relatively dry conditions and you're trying to really scrimp on weight, it's unlikely you need your waterproofs to stay dry. during the day, but you might need them for the very occasional rainstorm. That might be, at the margins, a reason for wearing them. Just everything in your sleeping bag if, but

[00:50:00] sleep, you know, Gore-Tex clothing is not that, you know, quiet often. So, the discomfort, the faff, the potential for getting hot and sweaty. And yes, Gore-Tex and breathable clothing, vapor-permeable membranes, will pass moisture through them, but if you're too warm and you're sweating, and it passes through your clothing, it's going to end up in your sleeping bag and it will make a and I often see this. So, my exception to this is if I have been canoeing and I have not been wearing dry pants, and I've got very wet feet. At the end of the day, I've been wading a lot. We've been lining, we've been dragging boats through. We might have been dragging boats through, you know. I've been up to my knees or up to my waist in, you know, water and bog.

[00:50:53] You know, my feet have been wet all day. When I get to camp, I'm going to try and dry my feet out, but they're going to take a while to recover. What I've found works really well is I have a pair of seal skin socks that I put on in my sleep when I go to bed, so my feet are still looking like they've been in the bath; you know, they're all white and curled up, and you know. looking like they've been, you know, shriveled and, you know what I mean. I put the seal skin socks on, the breathable socks on before I go to bed, and they look brand new; the feet look brand new in the morning.

[00:51:34] And what that does tend to do is make the bottom of the sleeping bag a bit damp, though, because all that moisture has come out of your feet, it's come through the vapor permeable sock, and then it's gone into the bottom of the sleeping bag. And you don't want to be doing that with your whole sleeping bag either; if you're sweating, the whole thing, the whole bag would be getting damp, and so you want to try and stay at the right temperature. in your bag, but again, it depends on the conditions. Like some conditions, you might get very sweaty, and you're in your waterproofs, in which case you probably shouldn't have them on, right? But the main issue that I have with it is, as a

general rule, you only want to be wearing the minimum possible in your sleeping bag so that your temperature, as it goes up and down, your circadian rhythm works, and your core temperature does go up and down as you sleep.

[00:52:28] You don't end up too warm and sweating, and your clothing, then, that you're wearing outdoors, is not subjected to that sweat. Then, equally, you are not putting damp clothing on at the end of the day that you've been wearing hiking or in the rain, and introducing that into your sleeping kit. So I don't plan to wear clothing inside sleeping bags. Some circumstances, it can be useful to do it because it's an unseasonably cold night, but otherwise, I definitely don't plan to do it. I'd rather take an extra few hundred grams of down in the sleeping bag to keep me the right temperature overnight and use my outdoor clothing for what it's intended to do, which is to keep me warm and dry outside, and not mix the two.

[00:53:15] That's my preference; other people can do other things, but I come from like I hear a lot about, you know, like through hiking wearing lightweight shoes and this type of stuff and I come from a very wet place and you know a lot of the things that work maybe on the parts of the Pacific Crest Trail are not going to work on the what in the West Highlands of Scotland and because it's just wet and you're going to get you're going to get trench foot and hyperthermia doing some of the stuff that you read in some of the lightweight hiking circles but then other places arid spots you can get away with very little

[00:53:57] as long as the nighttime temperatures are not too too low so it's also partly contextual but as a general rule as I say and I'll reiterate it again I don't plan on trying to wear much of my clothing inside my sleeping bag as a substitute for the sleeping bag not being warm enough, and also I don't want the possibility of introducing cold, wet, smelly insulative garments that I've been wearing all day, or wet outer garments that I've been keeping me dry into my sleep system either. I want to keep the two separate, and that is it. And remember, you can support these sessions by buying me a coffee at [buymeacoffee.com forward slash Paul Kirtley](https://buymeacoffee.com/PaulKirtley). Also, if you want to get a curated sequence of emails of my best material, articles, podcasts, interviews with other experts, and how-tos.

[00:54:58] videos the the choice selection of ask Paul Kirtley's all in a logical order that makes sense, that builds your skills, your knowledge, your perceptions, and your perspectives on the outdoors. Then go to [PaulKirtley.co.uk forward slash emails](https://PaulKirtley.co.uk); that's [PaulKirtley.co.uk forward slash emails](https://PaulKirtley.co.uk) to sign up for those. It's free, you'll get a ton of content. I've been writing, making videos, making podcasts for the past 15 years, and a lot of it's buried deep, but it's still super valuable. And so I can get the best stuff to you in the right order just by you giving me your name and your email address, and I'll also give you occasionally some heads up on special offers, heads up on any new books or any other free resources that I've got coming. So there you go, and hope to see you there. Look forward to seeing you in the next session of Ask Paul Kirtley. Thanks for listening, keep the questions coming, and I'll see you in the next one. Links to everything that I've mentioned are below; some of them have been in the cards, and if you're listening by audio, go to [PaulKirtley.co.uk forward slash Ask Paul Kirtley 92](https://PaulKirtley.co.uk). We'll get all the links and everything

there too. All right, take care! Cheers.

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