



Midwest Homebrewing & Winemaking Supplies
5825 Excelsior Blvd.
St. Louis Park, MN 55416
952-925-9854 • 888-449-2739
www.midwestsupplies.com

How can I control my fermentation temperatures?

If you're wondering what the ideal fermentation temperatures are for ales and lagers, please [click here](#) for that information.

My house is a little cold in the winter, and I'm having a hard time fermenting ales. What can I do?

Yes, those of us in winter climates sometimes have this difficulty from time to time. It is easily solved with a number of methods and products. The first method is to simply wrap a blanket around your fermenter. While this isn't effective in many cases, it may do the trick if you're not that far below the ideal fermentation temperature. Beyond this, Midwest offers several solutions for the homebrewer.



**Midwest Supplies
Carboy Cover**



**Carboy
Bag**



**Home Brew
Heat Panel**



**FermWrap
Heater**



The Brew Belt

Midwest Supplies Carboy Cover: Made of maroon-colored felt, these affordable carboy covers help protect beer or wine from light. Features the message: "Shhhh...I am Fermenting!" While this product will shield your carboy from light, it will **not** significantly raise or lower the temperature.

Carboy Bag: While this product will shield your carboy from light, it will **not** significantly raise or lower the temperature. It may come in handy in the summer: simply throw some ice packs in every few days and it will help keep the fermentation temperature down to an acceptable level.

Home Brew Heat Panel: The Home Brew Heat Panel will ensure constant brewing temperature, which is crucial for the success of brewing beer, wine or spirits. It is simple to use; just plug it in and set your fermenter on the panel. Use the panel in conjunction with a Stopper Thermowell and Digital Temperature Controller for the ultimate in temperature control.

FermWrap Heater: Small heating wrap that is placed directly onto the fermenter to increase heat 5-20°F. While this doesn't have a precise setting (it's either on or off), this will work for you if you're just a few degrees below ideal temp.

The Brew Belt: Designed to wrap around most primary (up to 10 gallon) or secondary fermenters and carboys. Heats to a constant 75°F. Great for winter time basement brewing and wine making. If you'll be using it on a glass carboy, Midwest suggests using it in conjunction with the [4-in-1 Carboy Shield](#) to prevent breakage. The lower the belt is positioned on the fermenting container, the higher the wort temperature will rise. The belt should not be left plugged in for more than 8 days in a row. It should not (and really doesn't need to be) used in room temperatures above 75-80 degrees F. The wort temperature should be monitored daily. Do not cover the belt with a blanket or wrap it, and keep it away from flammable material.

All of these products are great for keeping your fermenters at the ideal temperature for fermenting ales. But what if you're trying to brew a lager without spending a ton of cash? How can you lower the temperature of your fermenter to within the ideal fermentation temperature for lagering?

I'd like to try lagering. What do I need to differently than ales?

There comes a point in every homebrewer's life when they want to try making a lager. What's the big mystery? Why are they harder to make than ales? Well, they really aren't any harder to brew, they just require a lower

fermentation temperature and more patience. Many average gravity lagers will take 2 weeks in the primary, including a 3-6 day diacetyl rest, then 2-4 weeks in the secondary at lager temps (33-35°F) until an acceptable amount of sulfur has blown off. Higher gravity lagers, such as Doppelbocks, Maibocks and Oktoberfests, may take up to 4 weeks in the primary and up to 6 months in the secondary. For more details on lagering, please [click here](#). Keeping all of this in mind, you will need a place to lager your beer that will remain at ideal lagering temperatures for an extended period of time. Most lager strains enjoy optimum fermentation temperatures between 45 and 55°F, with some exceptions. You can use a basement floor, which may be a little warm, but should be fine. Just make sure that the floor stays at a fairly constant temperature. You do not want your beer to change temperatures throughout the day. This will lead to some very off-flavors in your end product. The ideal temp for most lagers is 52°F, but some styles might require temps a little lower or higher. This is where a controlled environment is very helpful. Most homebrewers create this controlled environment with an extra refrigerator and a thermostat controller. Used refrigerators are almost literally a dime a dozen on Craigslist. With a minimum of looking, you'll probably be able to find one for way under 50 bucks. You will usually need to haul it though! Pair this up with a thermostat, and you're ready to lager!



**Johnson Analog
Thermostat Controller**



**Johnson Digital
Thermostat Controller**



**Stopper
Thermowell**

Johnson Analog Thermostat Controller: This unit has a metal probe that you place inside the refrigerator or freezer. The probe reads the inside temperature, and adjusts to within 3.5 degrees of the temperature you set on the analog dial. This unit can be set between 20 and 80°F in one degree increments.

Johnson Digital Thermostat Controller: This is much like the analog controller above, but allows much greater control over the temperature of the environment. While the analog controller adjusts to within 3.5 degrees of your chosen setting, the digital controller actually allows you to set what the differential will be, down to 1 degree. In other words, it can be set so that if the ambient temperature goes 1 degree above or below the temperature set on the dial, the thermostat will switch on or off to adjust.

Stopper Thermowell: Use the Stopper Thermowell in conjunction with the Digital Thermostat Control unit (the probe on the analog controller will not fit into the Thermowell) and a refrigerator to more accurately regulate internal temperature within fermentation in warm environments. It is exceptionally useful during the start of fermentation when the difference between the temperature in the refrigerator and beer or wine temperature in the carboy differ greatly. May also be used with the FermWrap heater or Home Brew Heat Pad to warm up the fermentation in cool environments. Designed to fit any carboy or fermenter with an opening that accepts a #6.5 stopper. The thermowell is 15" in length.