

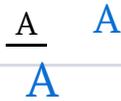
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ENTERTAINMENT

Cal Wilson column: Creative ways to warm up this winter

By Cal Wilson

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Guys, I can't get warm. I'm not complaining about winter, mind you, I'm happy to see it. For a while there I thought we were just going to get autumn, and photocopy of autumn. I just can't seem to get cosy enough.

Every year I forget how to dress for the cold, and the first time we have proper wintery rain, I lose my mind. It's like I've never had to deal with low temperatures and wet sky before. I forget how to dress in layers, and that jeans have no insulating qualities whatsoever. It should be obvious – you never see a polar bear made of denim.

I'm constantly, complainingly, cold. I'm like a whinging vertical lizard, a heat-seeking missus. People like to trot out sayings like "There's no such thing as bad weather, there's only the wrong clothing", to which I reply: "Enjoy that tornado, I hope your concrete-bunker pants are working."

Fortunately we own doona suits, which is basically your bed made into a tracksuit. My husband has a black one, and when he wears it he looks like a fat ninja. Doona suits are delightfully warm but they're not exactly sexy. I'm not sure anything quilted ever is. I love getting into what is essentially a full-body tea cosy but I can't quite bring myself to wear it out of the house.

When it comes to fashion, it seems you can be warm enough, or you can look nice. No one



gets dressed for a night out hoping they look snug. The Miss Universe competition doesn't have a thermals section. I want someone to invent sexy warm clothing; something a little saucy but still padded for heat retention. I've even thought of the name: Quilty Pleasures. You're welcome.



Cal Wilson.

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I spent my childhood trying to squirm out of the thigh-length singlets my mother insisted I wear ("It'll keep your kidneys warm"). Now I dream of one long enough to button on to my socks. Every single human in Melbourne seems to be wearing a down vest these days. They're the closest thing to quilted stylishness I've seen. But while they look cool on some people, they just make me look like I'm off to pick up Tarquin and Persephone from soccer in the four-wheel-drive. I have to admit they're warm – although given how toasty a down vest is, how are ducks not constantly overheating? Maybe that's why they sound so cross all the time: "Oh for crying out loud, I'm roasting. Why didn't we evolve with zips?"

Given the weather, and my poor circulation, at night I've been practising the ancient marital art of warming your feet on your husband's legs without him instantly divorcing you. It's a delicate balancing act. You have to leave it long enough that the contact won't wake him, but not so long that you've got hypothermia of the feet.

If you take my husband's word/enraged shrieks for it, my feet aren't as cold as ice, they're colder. He reckons my veins are full of liquid nitrogen, because anything that comes in contact with my bare foot instantly shatters. In order to remain married, I've had to resort to wearing the least alluring item of clothing in the known universe: bedsocks. Bedsocks are the ultimate passion assassin (if Angelina Jolie had worn bedsocks in Mr and Mrs Smith, Brad Pitt would still be married to Jennifer Aniston).

Now I have a new night-time routine. I like to hover seductively by the bed in the thick flannel nightie I got from Dimmeys, with pawpaw ointment smeared round my cold-reddened nostrils, waving a bedsocked foot at my husband while crooning "you're a lucky, lucky man..."

He is lucky, of course, as am I. We have a roof over our heads, and however daggy we might look in it, enough clothing to keep our family warm. I'm grateful for that, and I'm aware that way too many people aren't in that position. I've started donating stuff to St Kilda Mums, a volunteer-run, not-for-profit organisation that helps families experiencing hardship. They're called St Kilda Mums because, well, that's what they are. For the past five years they've collected children's clothing and nursery equipment, and working with social service agencies and maternal health nurses, distribute them to families in need.

This winter their Coats for Kids campaign has collected more than a thousand children's warm coats. They make up clothing packs for newborns, source double prams for families with twins, and pass on the love in a very practical way. If it's possible to have a crush on an organisation, I

have a crush on St Kilda Mums. You can find them on Facebook and Twitter. When I think of all the families they're helping, I feel warm.



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