

## Making a Shelter

This should be your first priority. Snow is an excellent insulator and should be used to help you make a shelter that is as enclosed as possible, while still providing air flow. Trees will protect you from the wind and provide fuel for making a fire. Using tree boughs to make a bed and roof is also a great way to stay dry and safe.

### + Tree Pit Shelter

Studies show that people who get below the treeline survive far more often than those who don't.

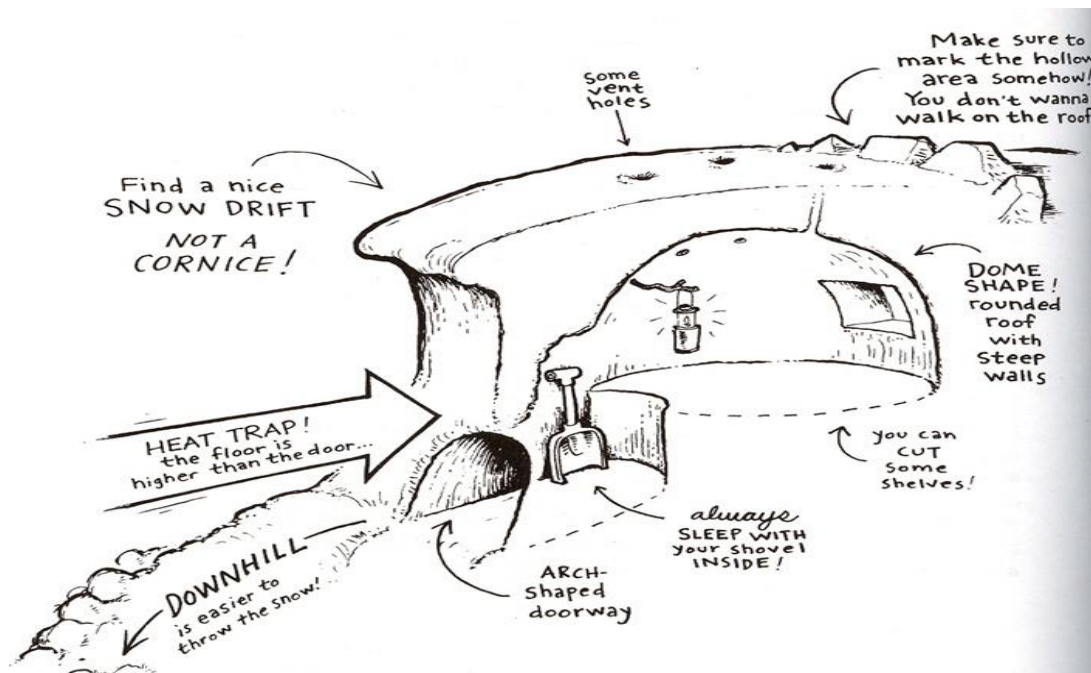
1. You should begin by looking for a large tree in deep snow surroundings, with thick lower branches. When constructing this shelter these branches will provide you with a natural roof.
2. Break away any branches you will need to allow you to get under the tree. Save the branches to incorporate into the shelter later.
3. Dig out the snow around the trunk of the tree. Dig down until you reach bare ground, or as deep as needed to fit into the shelter. Keep the shelter space small to reduce the amount of space to heat.
4. Pack the snow around the top and the inside walls of the hole to provide support. Gather evergreen boughs or any other insulating material you can find to use as lining for bottom and walls of the pit.
5. Finally collect additional boughs and place them over the top of the pit to give you additional overhead cover and to prevent snow from falling off the tree into the shelter.



## + Snow Cave

A T-shaped snow cave is a quick and efficient way to protect yourself from even the worst winter storm.

1. First you will need to locate a large snow drift or steep, stable snow slope.
2. Dig an entrance about 18 inches wide and as high as your chest.
3. To make it easier to dig, widen the top of the entrance to form a T shape.
4. Dig several feet farther into the drift and excavate the interior of the cave. The floor of the cave will be at about waist level, so much of your digging will be upward and to the sides.
5. When the interior space is fully formed, use blocks of snow, bags of snow or snowballs packed together to seal the top of the T.
6. Use a shovel handle or stick to poke several ventilation holes in the ceiling at a 45-degree angle to the floor. Use a bag of snow to seal the tunnel entrance.



## + Snow Trench

One of the safest kinds of shelter is a snow trench since there is more than just a layer of snow overhead decreasing the chance of collapse.

1. Start by digging a pit in whatever shape best suits your needs. However a rectangular one is easiest to cover later. During the construction, it's important to stay as dry as possible. If you do not have a shovel try kicking out the snow rather than carrying armloads of it and wetting your upper body.
2. If it's feasible, dig all the way to the ground. Ideally, height ought to be around four feet, a little deeper if you intend to have a small fire.
3. Place a minimum layer of six inches of vegetation on the bottom (excluding the fire area, which is built on the snow or the ground). Pine and fir boughs are most abundant at this time, but be on the lookout for grasses and barks, among other things. This layer will keep you above the snow and the build-up of water.
4. Roof in the entire trench by placing long sticks across the top and then covering with a thick layer of boughs and then snow. Remember to plan for an adequate air vent through the brush and snow. Plug the door with a block of snow, bag or more vegetation and bed down for the night out of the wind and cold.

