

Before going into the huge number of uses for mylar blankets let's look at their primary use.

Most people have a mylar blanket in their kit, the question is, do you know how to use it? That sounds like a stupid question, but bear with me.

**Using a space blanket when you are really cold is not the best idea. It will take an age to warm you up and could even make you colder in certain circumstances.**

The reason these blankets are shiny is to reflect heat, and if you are already very cold there is no heat to reflect and any ambient heat will be reflected away from you because of the shiny surface.

The optimum time to get out the mylar blanket and wrap yourself in it is when you start to feel a little chilled but **before you get truly cold**. That way the body heat you have left will be trapped between you and the blanket and will prevent further cooling.

These emergency blankets are notoriously flimsy and will flap around in the slightest breeze. For optimum warming, take off your jacket, wrap the mylar poncho style around you, including over your head and then put on your jacket and hood or hat. If you get too hot, undo your jacket zip to let some of the heat out or uncover your head for a few minutes.

Remember the mylar does not possess breathability properties so beware of moisture building up from sweat. The optimum is to be warm and dry not warm and wet, or even damp.

Mylar is waterproof so if you have a jacket zip failure wrapping the blanket around you will keep the rain out, again if it's at all windy put it under your jacket.

Okay, onto the other uses for a space blanket. The highly reflective properties of mylar, or polyethylene terephthalate to give it its real name, make it suitable for many things, and not just in emergency situations out of doors.

Carrying two or more of these lightweight, cheap blankets is always better than carrying one, and having a dozen of these cheap but amazingly adaptable items is better still, you'll see why as we move down the list.

1. Position the blanket behind a campfire so that the heat is reflected back towards you rather than lost. Mylar melts at 254°C so there is no fire danger. If you have a second blanket, position it behind you. This will 'bounce' the heat around and will make that little area positively toasty compared to the area outside of the blankets.
2. Cut up the blanket to line boots and gloves. Fingers and toes are areas that are far more sensitive to both frost nip and frost bite.
3. Mylar is waterproof and using it on top of a groundsheet, or even as a groundsheet will prevent damp and also retain heat where you need it.
4. It's reflective properties make it an excellent sunshade. It will be many degrees cooler underneath the shade than in full sun.
5. They are great for catching rain to give you a top up water supply. Either a natural depression in the ground or one you make yourself will suffice.
6. Building a soil or rock 'casing' and lining it with the blanket can make an okay solar oven. Position facing the noonday sun and cut the food into small pieces. Slivers of meat rather than chunks will cook more quickly and thoroughly.
7. It's reflective properties make it an excellent signal that acts like a giant signal mirror. If you are moving on place soil or rocks on top leaving the shape of an arrow uncovered which points to your direction of travel.
8. Small strips of mylar make great fishing lures, fish are attracted to shiny surfaces.

9. These blankets are quite strong and can easily be fashioned into a sling in an emergency. Cut a wide strip place around the broken arm and tie at the back of the casualty's neck.
10. A thin strip can be used as a makeshift tourniquet.
11. Put on the inside of blacked out windows will prevent heat loss through the glass.
12. Positioned behind a wood stove or similar will throw out heat into the room rather than letting the wall behind it absorb the heat.
13. Positioned behind candles or lanterns the light will be reflected back into the room. You will be surprised how much extra light you get from this.
14. Birds hate mylar, the changing reflections and constant movement keeps them off the fruit bushes and away from the veggies.
15. Placed inside a duvet cover they will prevent heat loss during the coldest part of the night. The crinkling noise is a bit irritating, but it's better than freezing if there is no heat source through the night.
16. Placing them over the windscreen of your car whilst the car is still warm from your trip prevents ice buildup on the glass. Just trap the ends of the blanket in the doors.
17. As they are so light putting them over the veggie beds during the hottest parts of the day stops the plants shriveling. It also cuts down on moisture loss due to evaporation.
18. Cut into strips and plaited they make extremely strong emergency cordage. I wouldn't trust a mylar rope for rappelling etc. as the texture of the fabric allows it to slip a little.
19. Left folded but out of its plastic wrapper it can be used as a reflective fire starter. I haven't tried this one, but I am assured by a Boy Scout it works.
20. Thin card covered in mylar on one side can be slipped behind a radiator substantially increasing the heat output into the room.
21. They are invaluable under picnic blankets to prevent damp coming through, and also good for turning kids into aliens and robots when they can't get outside to play.
22. The Boy Scout tells me that once your laundry has stopped dripping, placing it on a mylar blanket in the sun dries it double quick.
- 22<sup>1/2</sup>. Many people use these blankets to build a simple shelter but I haven't put it on the list for several reasons.
  - Even trying this on a still day, in the garden, with no stress or emergency, it proved to be quite difficult.
  - The size of the blankets makes them too small to be of great use as a shelter in my opinion.
  - They are so lightweight that there's a distinct chance they would blow away.

I think if one was used as an inner layer and debris etc. was piled up on the outside of it the shelter would be far more viable but personally I think it would be impossible to get it tied to supports, and keep it on the ground if there was anything more than a slight breeze.

Well, I hope you found something useful enough to make a difference.

Take Care

Liz

- See more at: <http://undergroundmedic.com/?p=5693#sthash.ptmj6zoF.dpuf>