



October 5, 2004

## Caring For Your Tent

By Dennis Gaub for KOA Kompass

Caring for your tent properly can ensure that it will last through many camping experiences. Here are some guidelines from [OutdoorPlaces.com](http://OutdoorPlaces.com), [Gorp.com](http://Gorp.com), and personal advice from the author's own experiences:

- Waterproof the seams with a seam sealer recommended by the manufacturer even if the seams were pre-treated.
- Practice setting up your tent before going on a trip. A nice day in the back yard is a better setting to learn about your tent than a campground where darkness is fast advancing, or it's raining. Under those circumstances, the chance of breaking or tearing something increases.
- Don't pack a wet tent if possible – let it dry while standing at the campsite. If leaving with a wet tent is unavoidable, set up the tent and allow it to dry at the earliest opportunity to avoid mildew.
- Try to not touch the inside of the tent because the oils on your skin can reduce the waterproofing capability.
- Carry duct tape for quick repairs of small tears, splintered tent poles and the like.
- Use a ground cloth beneath the tent floor to keep it clean and protect it from rocks and tree roots. An inexpensive polyethylene sheet from a hardware store works fine.
- Stake your tent, even if it is a freestanding model, so it can't move in a strong wind.
- Keep your tent clean. A whiskbroom is handy for sweeping out dirt and leaves.
- Try to camp in the shade to avoid prolonged exposure to the sun's UV rays, which can damage tent material. Or, leave the rain fly covering the tent because the rain fly is cheaper to replace.

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