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Why Your Cold Hands Have Got Nothing To Do With 'Poor Circulation'



By [Hannah Gilchrist](#) Posted on January 29, 2015

Why, when we're wrapped up in hats, gloves and thick socks are our hands and feet always cold?



You spend hours wrapping yourself up in hundreds of [layers](#), [hats](#), [gloves](#), [thick socks](#), but still, you're freezing. Turns out, no matter what anyone tells you about being cold, it's got nothing to do with 'poor circulation'.

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'When otherwise healthy people get cold fingers/toes/ears/noses this is not "poor circulation," explains Professor Mark Whiteley, Consultant Surgeon at The Whiteley Clinic. 'Real "poor circulation" means that the arteries are narrowed or blocked - such as can happen after many years for smokers and some people with high blood pressure or diabetes.'

He continues: 'For a person with a healthy circulation their blood vessels (arteries) constrict in the cold to stop warm blood from getting into very cold areas, to keep your vital organs warm and to stop you from freezing to death. It actually keeps you healthy by keeping your core temperature steady.'

So instead of grabbing a pair of fingerless gloves and a **cape**, Professor Whiteley suggests the only 'real' solution to cold hands and feet is to, erm, dress sensibly. Why do we get the feeling we're not going to like the next piece of advice?

'Forget fashion and wear the items that insulate you most,' he recommends. 'You might look like a **walking duvet** but you'll be very warm.'

Need more practical tips? Here's a professor's guide to keeping warm:

- **Wear a hat**, you lose lots of heat through your head.
- If you start to get cold, get inside and warm up.
- **Don't smoke** or you might get real 'poor circulation'.
- Wrap up warm in clothes that keep the warm in. If you are wrapped up and you get cold quickly, then your clothes might be more fashionable than insulating.

Time for a wardrobe re-think.

*Professor Mark Whiteley is a consultant surgeon at **The Whiteley Clinic***