



Western Mountaineering Retail Product Clinic



A Guide for Retail Staff
San Jose, California • Since 1970



Digital Product Clinic

Welcome To Western Mountaineering

Craftsmanship, Performance, and Sleeping Bags Built to Last

A Small Company Focused on One Thing

Western Mountaineering has been building premium sleeping bags and down garments in San Jose, California since 1970. From the beginning, our focus has been simple: create the highest-quality sleeping bags in the world.

Rather than chasing trends or expanding into dozens of product categories, we've stayed focused on perfecting the tools that keep people warm in the mountains.

Every bag we produce reflects decades of refinement in materials, construction, and design.

Built in San Jose, California

Western Mountaineering sleeping bags are cut, sewn, and finished in our San Jose factory.

This allows us to:

- Maintain strict quality control
- Refine designs over time
- Work closely with the people who build our products

The result is gear that is consistent, reliable, and built to perform for decades.

Retail Tip

Western Mountaineering customers are often experienced backpackers and climbers. Focus on helping them find the right bag for their conditions, and the product will often sell itself.

Why Customers Choose Western Mountaineering

Western Mountaineering bags are trusted by backpackers, climbers, guides, and expedition travelers worldwide.

Customers choose WM for:

- Outstanding warmth-to-weight performance
- Premium goose down insulation
- Durable materials and careful construction
- Sleeping bags built to last decades

Did You Know?

Because our sleeping bags are made in our San Jose factory, we are able to offer repairs and overfills to keep bags performing for decades.



Digital Product Clinic

Why Western Mountaineering Bags Are Different

Premium Materials • Design and Craftsmanship

Premium Goose Down

Western Mountaineering uses exceptionally high-fill-power goose down ethically sourced from trusted suppliers in Europe.

Higher fill power means larger, more resilient down clusters that trap more air and provide superior insulation.

This premium down offers:

- Outstanding warmth for minimal weight
- Excellent loft and compressibility
- Long-lasting insulation performance

Technical Fabrics

Western Mountaineering sleeping bags use lightweight, durable, and breathable technical shell fabrics designed specifically for high-performance down products. Different models use different shell fabrics tailored to specific pursuits — from ultralight backpacking to rugged alpine environments.

These fabrics provide:

- Low weight for efficient packing
- Tight down-proof weaves that keep insulation contained
- Breathable performance for comfort in changing conditions

Thoughtful Design

Western Mountaineering sleeping bags are designed with a simple goal: maximize warmth, efficiency, and long-term durability. Every design element is carefully considered to improve performance in the mountains.

- Efficient baffle layouts that maintain consistent loft
- Carefully balanced warmth-to-weight ratios
- Designs refined through decades of field experience

The result is sleeping bags that are simple, efficient, and built to perform for the long haul.

Meticulous Construction

Every Western Mountaineering sleeping bag is cut, sewn, and finished in our San Jose, California factory.

Working with experienced craftspeople allows us to maintain strict quality control and ensure every bag meets our standards.

- Precise sewing and finishing
- Durable seams and high-quality components
- Consistent loft throughout the bag

This attention to detail helps ensure Western Mountaineering bags perform reliably for many years of use.



Digital Product Clinic

Understanding Temperature Ratings

Real-World Performance in the Mountains

How Temperature Ratings Work

A sleeping bag's temperature rating represents the approximate lowest temperature at which the bag is designed to perform when used properly.

However, comfort in a sleeping bag depends on several factors beyond the bag itself, including:

- Individual metabolism (warm vs. cold sleepers)
 - Hydration and nutrition
 - Altitude, humidity, and weather conditions
- Temperature ratings are based on use with a sleeping pad rated at least R-4. Without adequate ground insulation, the bag will not perform to its tested rating.

Why Western Mountaineering Ratings Are Conservative

Western Mountaineering temperature ratings reflect real-world use and long-term experience designing sleeping bags.

While some models have been laboratory tested, our published ratings are Western Mountaineering ratings, informed by in-house testing and decades of feedback from backpackers, climbers, and expedition travelers.

In many cases, our published ratings fall between the industry "comfort" and "lower limit" benchmarks, helping ensure reliable warmth in the field.

Choosing the Right Temperature Rating

When selecting a sleeping bag, it's usually best to choose a rating that provides a margin of warmth beyond the expected low temperature.

A common guideline is to select a bag rated 5–10°F colder than the lowest temperature expected, especially for people who sleep cold or expect challenging conditions. This extra margin helps account for changing weather, fatigue, and other real-world variables that affect warmth.

Retail Tip

No pad, no warmth. Sleeping bags are tested with an R-4+ pad—use this as an opportunity to ask what your customer is currently using, recommend the right pad for their conditions, and help them build a complete, dialed sleep system for consistent warmth.

Did You Know?

Many Western Mountaineering sleeping bags can be overfilled with additional down, increasing warmth and extending the life of the bag. This service can be arranged directly through the factory.



Digital Product Clinic

Sleeping Bag Shapes and Fit

Choosing the Right Bag for Comfort and Efficiency

Why Fit Matters

Sleeping bags keep you warm by trapping a layer of air that your body heats while you sleep.

A bag that is too large creates extra air space that your body must warm, which can reduce efficiency. A bag that is too tight may compress insulation and reduce comfort.

The right fit helps provide:

- Better warmth retention
- Improved sleeping comfort
- Efficient warmth-to-weight performance

Size and Length Options

Western Mountaineering offers multiple length options to help match the sleeping bag to the user’s height.

Most models are available in 5'6", 6'0", and 6'6" lengths, with select models also offered in a 7'0" length for very tall users.

Choosing the correct length improves warmth, comfort, and efficiency. A bag that is too long creates extra air space for the body to heat, while a properly sized bag retains warmth more effectively.

Mummy Shape

The mummy shape is the most thermally efficient design, tapering from shoulders to footbox to reduce excess space and maximize warmth.

Mummy bags are ideal for:

- Backpacking and mountaineering
- Cold conditions
- Weight-conscious trips

This shape provides the best warmth-to-weight performance.

Retail Tip

One size doesn’t fit all. Match your customer to the right shape and size using Western Mountaineering’s range of options.

Relaxed and Semi-Rectangular Shapes

Some Western Mountaineering models offer a roomier cut that allows more movement while sleeping. These bags provide:

- More shoulder and leg room
- Greater comfort for side sleepers
- A less restrictive feel

They are well suited for campers who prioritize comfort while still wanting the warmth and performance of a premium down bag.

Did You Know?

A bag that’s too big can feel colder—proper fit improves warmth, and WM offers shapes and sizes to match.



Western Mountaineering Bag Families

Understanding the Different Series

ExtremeLite Series

The ExtremeLite Series features Western Mountaineering’s lightest shell fabrics and is designed for maximum warmth with minimal weight.

These bags are ideal for:

- Backpacking and thru-hiking
- Weight-conscious trips
- Dry to moderately humid environments

ExtremeLite models offer some of the best warmth-to-weight performance available, making them a favorite among lightweight backpackers.

MicroLite XP Series

The MicroLite XP Series uses a slightly heavier, more durable shell fabric with a dense thread count that provides natural water resistance while remaining breathable.

These bags are well suited for:

- Extended backpacking trips
- Rougher terrain and repeated use
- Users who prioritize durability

MicroLite XP bags provide excellent warmth with increased durability compared to the lightest fabrics.

StormShield Series

The StormShield Series features a windproof, highly water-resistant shell fabric designed to provide extra protection in damp or variable weather.

These bags are ideal for:

- Wet or humid environments
- Alpine conditions
- Trips where condensation or moisture may be a concern

StormShield fabrics help maintain insulation performance when conditions become cold and damp.

Retail Tip

Start by identifying the environment your customer expects to encounter. Dry backpacking trips often favor ExtremeLite, while wetter or harsher conditions may benefit from StormShield fabrics.

Did You Know?

The primary difference between Western Mountaineering bag families is the shell fabric, which balances weight, durability, and weather protection. All models use the same premium goose down and high-quality components, along with the same careful construction.



Digital Product Clinic

Sleeping Bag Design Features

Western Mountaineering sleeping bags are designed with a focus on efficient insulation, heat retention, and long-term durability. Many small design features work together to improve warmth and overall performance in the field.

These details may seem subtle, but they play an important role in how well a sleeping bag performs in real conditions.

Differential Cut Construction

Western Mountaineering sleeping bags use a differential cut, meaning the inner lining is cut slightly smaller than the outer shell.

This allows the insulation to fully loft without being compressed by the sleeper.

Benefits include:

- Maximum loft and insulation performance
- Reduced compression of the down
- More consistent warmth throughout the bag

Draft Collar and Draft Tubes

Cold air often enters a sleeping bag through openings around the neck or along the zipper.

Western Mountaineering bags use down-filled draft collars and insulated zipper draft tubes to help seal in warmth.

These features help:

- Prevent warm air from escaping
- Block cold air from entering
- Improve overall thermal efficiency

Premium Components

Western Mountaineering sleeping bags use high-quality components designed for durability and long-term reliability.

These include:

- Durable YKK zippers
- Reinforced stitching and construction
- Carefully selected shell fabrics

These details help ensure that Western Mountaineering sleeping bags perform reliably for many years in the field.

Continuous Baffles

Many Western Mountaineering bags feature continuous horizontal baffles that allow down to be redistributed along the length of the bag.

This design allows users to:

- Move down to the top for extra warmth in colder conditions
- Shift down underneath for better comfort in warmer temperatures

Continuous baffles help make a sleeping bag more versatile across a wider range of temperatures.



Digital Product Clinic

Sleeping Bags Built to Last

Longevity, Care, and Factory Service

Long Product Lifespan

Western Mountaineering sleeping bags are designed and built to perform for many years of regular use.

Premium materials, careful construction, and high-quality down help maintain insulation performance over time.

With proper care and storage, many Western Mountaineering bags remain in service for decades.

Made in San Jose, California

Western Mountaineering sleeping bags are cut, sewn, and finished in our San Jose factory.

This allows close oversight of materials, construction, and quality control at every stage of production.

Building our bags in-house also allows us to provide long-term service and repairs.

Repairs and Overfills

Because Western Mountaineering sleeping bags are built in our own factory, we are able to offer repair services for many issues that may arise over time.

We can also add overfill to many models, increasing loft and helping extend the life of the bag.

All Western Mountaineering sleeping bags are backed by a lifetime warranty against defects in materials and workmanship, helping ensure long-term confidence in your gear.

Retail Tip

Customers sometimes focus only on the initial price of a sleeping bag.

Helping them understand the long lifespan and serviceability of a Western Mountaineering bag can help put that investment into perspective.

Did You Know?

Many Western Mountaineering sleeping bags remain in regular use 20–30 years after they were made. With proper care and occasional service, a high-quality down bag can provide reliable warmth for decades of adventures.



Helping Customers Choose the Right Bag

A Simple Guide for Retail Staff

What Temperatures Do You Expect?

The expected lowest nighttime temperature is usually the most important factor when choosing a sleeping bag. Encourage customers to think about the coldest realistic night, not just average conditions.

As a general guideline, it is often best to select a bag rated 5–10°F colder than the expected low temperature to provide a margin of warmth for changing conditions.

Encourage customers to also consider:

- Whether they tend to sleep warm or cold
- Expected weather and exposure
- Elevation and seasonal conditions

What Type of Trip Are You Planning?

The type of trip can help determine which bag family may be the best fit. Different environments place different demands on weight, durability, and weather protection.

Examples:

- ExtremeLite Series — ideal for lightweight backpacking and dry environments
- MicroLite XP Series — excellent durability for extended trips
- StormShield Series — best suited for damp or variable conditions

Understanding the trip environment helps match the bag’s shell fabric and performance to the customer’s needs.

What Shape Feels Most Comfortable?

Sleeping bag shape affects both comfort and warmth efficiency.

- Mummy bags offer the most efficient warmth for colder conditions and weight-conscious trips.
- Relaxed mummy and semi-rectangular designs provide additional room for sleepers who prioritize comfort and mobility.

Encourage customers to consider how they normally sleep and move during the night, especially if they tend to shift positions frequently.

Does the Length Fit the User?

A properly sized bag improves warmth, comfort, and efficiency.

Most Western Mountaineering models are available in 5'6", 6'0", and 6'6" lengths, with some models offered in a 7'0" length for taller users.

A bag that is too long creates excess air space that reduces warmth, while a properly sized bag performs more efficiently.

Western Mountaineering — Helping people sleep comfortably in the mountains since 1970.