

ESSENTIAL BUSHCRAFT

In the rainforest clothing has to withstand continuous wet. There is no better footwear than the US Army jungle boot: look for genuine boots in the modern version, which has Cordura uppers and leather soles with speedlacing. New boots will stretch a little after initial wearing. Inside I wear two pairs of wool socks. Wool doesn't go mouldy and unpleasant like cotton socks.

I prefer Lycra cycling shorts as underwear: they don't chafe between your legs. Wear long trousers, not shorts – strong ones that dry fast. Again the best are often ex-military trousers.

Try to avoid camouflage: in many countries you may be mistaken for a soldier and find yourself in trouble.

On top, a long-sleeved shirt or a jacket/shirt of tightly woven cotton gives good protection against insects and thorns. Make sure it has long sleeves,

which can be rolled down in the evening to cover up and avoid mosquito bites.

I tend not to wear a hat when I'm hiking through the rainforest as the brim impedes my vision, causing me to bang my head on low branches and vines, but on river journeys a short-brimmed cotton jungle hat is essential.

Normally in the rainforest we have two sets of clothes: a dry set and a wet set. Your wet clothes are those you wear during the day. In the evening, after setting up camp, you change out of your wet clothes, wring them out and hang them up to dry, then put on your dry clothes, which are kept in a dry bag. Powder your feet when you take off your boots and put on a pair of lightweight sneakers to wear around camp. Pack them carefully before setting out the next day, when you will put on your wet clothes again.

