

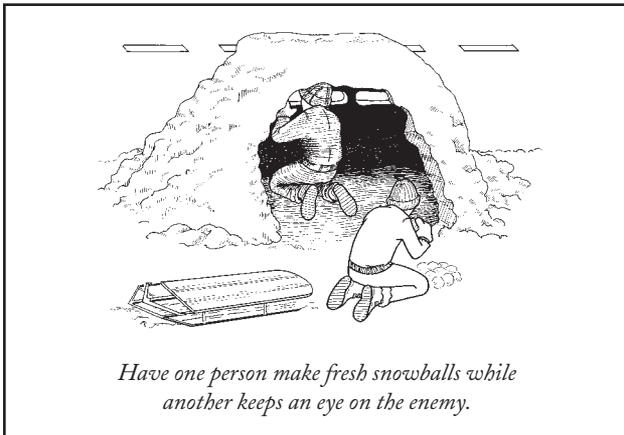
HOW TO WIN A SNOWBALL FIGHT

1 Test the snow.

Stick a twig, chopstick, or a thin utensil in the snow and pull it out quickly to determine the packing consistency. It should go in and come out smoothly, not hitting icy or solid patches. Snowball snow should not be frozen, nor should it be too dry (“powder”) or too wet (“granular” or “corn”). The snow needs just enough moisture to hold together as you shape it.

2 Doctor the snow.

The best air temperature for snowball making is above 5° F and below 32° F. If the air temperature is below 5° F, warm the snow in your hands before attempting to make a snowball.



3 Establish a base camp.

Find a suitable location with good sight lines and plenty of fresh snow (see “How to Build a Snow Fort,” page 151). Consider keeping a wall at your back to thwart flanking maneuvers.

4 Begin preparations.

Make as many snowballs as you can in advance of the battle. A good snowball should be larger than a golf ball but smaller than a cantaloupe, and should hold its shape when others are stacked on top of it.

5 Build a snowball sled.

Secure a wooden produce crate or waxed cardboard box to a sled’s rope. Fill the box with snowballs. Use the snowball sled to transport ammunition or a fresh supply of snow.

6 Use shields.

Maintain a supply of garbage can lids with handles; use these for shields during battle.

7 Aim low and throw straight.

Snowball fight rules dictate that hitting in the face is forbidden. Aim for the chest or lower body. Ice balls or snowballs containing foreign material are also considered unfair.

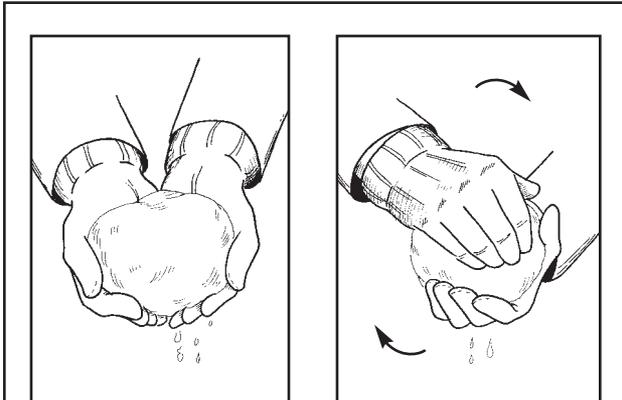
8 Secure prisoners.

Snowball fight rules provide for the taking of prisoners: An enemy hit three times is considered captured.

Captives may not be forced to fight their comrades, but may be pressed into service as snowball makers.

HOW TO MAKE SNOWBALLS

- 1 Scoop up two handfuls of snow.**
- 2 Press your hands together around the snow to create a sphere.**
- 3 Squeeze and rotate the sphere.**
Add snow or take some away, squeeze, and rotate, until the ball is perfectly round. A smooth, perfectly rounded ball is more aerodynamic and will throw better. Make sure it is easy to pick up and throw.



Scoop up two handfuls of snow, then squeeze and rotate until the ball is perfectly round.

- 4 Make more snowballs.**
Good snowballs made from the right consistency snow will stack easily and not stick together. Keep a pile within arm's reach.

HOW TO BUILD A SNOW FORT

A Snow-Mound Fort

- 1 Find a pile of freshly plowed snow.**
Snow plows create huge mounds of snow, saving you the trouble of creating one. Look in parking lots or on street corners for such piles. The pile should be at least four feet tall and several feet wide at the base. You will build your fort into this mound. Do not pick a mound on an active street that is likely to be replowed.
- 2 Compress the snow.**
If you can find a big piece of plywood—about the size of a door—place it on top of the mound and use it to compress the snow until the mound is about four feet high. If you cannot locate plywood, lie down on the mound. Use good packing snow (see “How to Win a Snowball Fight,” step 1, page 148).
- 3 Dig into the back of the mound.**
Create a small entrance hole, strategically placed so the enemy cannot see or attack it easily.

4 **Hollow out the mound.**

Dig out the center of the mound, pushing the snow out of the entrance hole. Use this snow for making snowballs.

5 **Make peepholes.**

Punch through the wall opposite the entrance with your fist or the handle of a shovel every several feet to create observation holes. These will enable you to detect a surprise attack.

6 **Defend your fort.**

A fort that is overrun can be used by your enemies.

A Block Fort

1 **Find a wooden produce crate or waxed cardboard box.**

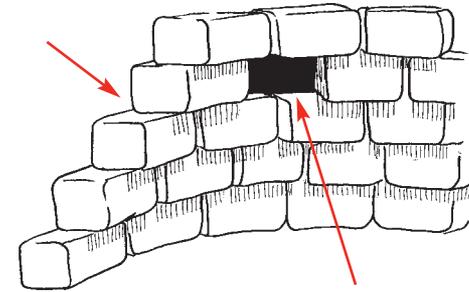
The box should be no larger than 1½ by 2 feet. Remove the flaps, if any, from the top. Utilize several boxes and people to expedite the process.

2 **Pack the box with snow.**

Pack tightly, with as little air as possible.

3 **Remove the snow block.**

Turn the box over. Gently pull the sides of the box or tap the sides of the box until the block slides out.



*Stagger snow blocks for increased stability.
Leave gaps for windows at eye level.*



Keep a stash of snowballs inside the fort.

4 **Amass snow blocks.**

Repeat steps 2 and 3 until you have several dozen snow blocks.

5 **Build an igloo-shaped structure.**

Place the bottom level of blocks in a circle 6 to 8 feet in diameter. Leave an open spot for the door. Stack the next layer on top, offsetting the ends in the traditional bricklaying pattern, and moving each block in a few inches toward the center. On either side of the door opening, move the blocks toward each other by a few inches, to make a roughly triangular opening. Repeat until the blocks meet at the top and there is enough room for you to crawl in. (You may need to trim blocks before placing them at the very top of the fort.) Omit a few blocks at eye level for windows.

6 **Fill in the cracks.**

Use snow to fill in the spaces between the blocks.

7 **Reinforce.**

Sprinkle the fort with water from a watering can and let the fort set overnight. In the morning it will be a hardened bastion.

Be Aware

- You may not always have time to get inside your fort when attacked. A good snow fort should be high enough to protect you from incoming snowballs if you hide behind it, but it should also be low enough for you to see around and throw over.

- Keep a stash of snowballs inside the fort.
- In case of a long, sustained siege, keep drinks, food, and blankets in the fort. Set them in a corner, out of the way of the action.
- Divide your manpower so there are scouts and hurlers outside, and snowball makers inside.