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## Wood Heat: A Heckuva Lot of Work

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Original article posted at [www.GirlsGoneNorth.blogspot.ca](http://www.GirlsGoneNorth.blogspot.ca) <sup>[1]</sup>

Before I moved here, a few of my more experienced acquaintances warned me that wood heat was a heckuva lot of work.

Wow – heating with wood is a heckuva a lot of work! For those of you yearning for an off-grid heat source, let me tell you about it.

If you happen to be independently wealthy, the minutiae of wood heat probably won't affect you. However, if wood heat is a practical money-saving move, you are in for more work than you might expect.

**First** - there is the acquisition of the wood in fireplace sized pieces. I skipped a couple of steps this year because I needed wood that was already split and seasoned to keep us warm. It's more expensive, of course, if someone else does the splitting, so this is a one-time luxury for us. My next load of wood will be un-split and I am going to learn to split it myself in preparation for *next* winter.

**Second** - your future heat source doesn't give a flying rat's tail if you don't feel well. If you leave it where it's dumped, you will no longer have dry wood. The dew or frost or possible rain will undo that year of seasoning the wood has undergone. You will have paid for wet wood which won't burn well. A wood delivery gets dumped out of a truck in a huge pile in the middle of your yard. I'm currently dealing with a respiratory infection, but the wood's still gotta be stacked.



**Third** - nearly each day will find you lugging wood into the house for burning. Again, the heat does not care if you have hurt your back, sprained your ankle or if you are feeling energetic that day. Lug wood or freeze.

**Fourth** - Starting a fire and keeping it going takes practice. I probably spend 45 minutes per day on my knees in front of the wood stove coaxing the fire to a) start burning, b) continue burning or c) resume burning when it goes out. I didn't realize that there was more to it than

lighting it and tossing a log in every few hours and this was very naive. However, I'm sure I'm not alone in the assumption – it seems like it should be so simple. It's NOT.

**Finally** - kindling is REALLY expensive to buy. Because of the sheer amount of chopping to get the wood into those little pieces, kindling is labor intensive, and thus, high-priced. A person in my area is moving his campsite and gave me permission to haul away his kindling.

So, because I'm cheap...er...thrifty...I'm dragging a wheel barrow 1/4 of a mile through a trail (there is no access for my truck), then bringing the loaded wheelbarrow back and stacking it. Also a LOT of work! This meager looking pile represents 5 wheelbarrow loads full – so two and a half miles with a wheelbarrow, loading the wheelbarrow and unloading the wheelbarrow. There are at least 20-30 more loads to come over. I don't mind because free stuff makes me happy and pushing it in a wheelbarrow is way less work than splitting it down to this size.



People rely on the power grid for a reason – it's much more convenient to have heat at the turn of a dial and lights at the flick of a switch. But somewhere along the line, all of that convenience has caused us to lose our health and lazy and overweight as a group. We've all come to rely on "just-in-time" satisfaction, whether it is our heat, the food in our cupboards or any other number of items we purchase whenever we need them. Many of us seem to have lost the ability to plan ahead like our ancestors were forced to do.

The benefits of heating with wood are so much more than just a warm cozy fire, but go into with your eyes open!

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[1] [www.GirlsGoneNorth.blogspot.ca](http://www.GirlsGoneNorth.blogspot.ca): <http://girlsgonenorth.blogspot.ca/2012/09/wood-heat-heckuva-lot-of-work.html>