

Don't Let Winter Weather freeze Your Exercise Plans

During winter months, "cooler" heads do not prevail. By following certain principles of cold weather exercise, your winter outdoor activities can be both enjoyable and kind to your health.

The following are ten healthful tips for winter exercise:

- 1) Unfortunately for those eager for excuses, most people live in climates where the temperature is rarely cold enough to prevent humans from exercising outdoors, be it running, walking or mere yardwork. Put simply, though you will have to dress more warmly, you will not "freeze your lungs". Get out there and enjoy it!
- 2) Keep your head and ears warm. Our greatest heat loss occurs through the head, so keeping it covered will help retain a substantial amount of body heat. Always take a hat with you, even if you don't think you'll need it.
- 3) Keep your hands and feet dry and warm. Mittens are warmer than gloves. Water-resistant, windproof mittens lined with polypropylene are best. Raising your heart rate will also help keep your extremities warm. When running in the snow, consider putting plastic bags over your socks.
- 4) Dress in layers. Materials closest to the skin should wick perspiration away without absorbing the moisture, and should "breathe", allowing moisture to dissipate. Polypropylene is one of the best; wool (contrary to traditional belief) and cotton are worst. Outer layers should be lightweight, supple, rain resistant yet breathable. Fabrics such as Gortex and Microsupplex are examples of such materials.
- 5) When the temperature drops below freezing, cover the genital area with extra wind-resistant material.
- 6) When running, walking, cycling, etc., start by going into the wind for the first half, then have the wind at your back for the second half.
- 7) Whenever possible, exercise in areas sheltered from the wind.
- 8) Never venture alone into remote areas. Tell someone where you are going, and when you expect to be back.
- 9) Exercise at mid-day when it is warmest.
- 10) Wear some sort of reflective clothing or safety vest when running, walking or cycling after dark.

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