

Staying Active in Winter

As it gets colder and darker outside, it is tempting and at many times, necessary to stay inside. However, it is important to stay active year-round. Winter is an optimal time to burn more calories while exercising since your body has to work much harder to stay warm. If you especially enjoy walking or running outside, consider the following strategies to stay active during the winter.

Dress Appropriately

Try to get some fresh air. Taking the opportunity to walk, jog, bike, or walk the dog outside is not only good for your physical health but can help your mental health as well.

Having the right apparel to protect yourself from the cold weather makes all the difference in the world. Layering is the key to avoiding over-dressing or under-dressing. Consider wearing a base layer that wicks moisture away from your skin and an outer layer that blocks the wind, rain or snow.

Your winter exercise wardrobe should include reflective strips due to limited daylight in the winter months and always keep your head, hands and feet covered to avoid hypothermia. If possible, plan your exercise route before heading out the door to be able to do the second half of your workout with the wind at your back. This way, you will be less likely to get chilled, especially if you have worked up a sweat.

Motivate Yourself with a Winter Sport

If you find it challenging to muster up the energy to exercise during the winter months, try getting your exercise in by getting outside and playing a sport. Enjoy the snow outside by going sledding, snowshoeing, cross-country skiing, downhill skiing, snowboarding or ice skating. The best part about these types of sports and activities is that they do not feel like exercise and can also be excellent cardiovascular exercise.

Exercise Indoors

If you are unable to exercise outside, try exploring methods of indoor exercise. Try following along with exercise routines. Many have the option of hiring a personal trainer for virtual sessions. You can invest in a few pieces of inexpensive fitness equipment, such as dumbbells, resistance bands or a stability ball. Performing exercises using your own body weight can also help you achieve a strenuous, calorie-burning workout.

If you have limited space, try yoga or pilates. If you have more space, try Zumba or a full-body workout that incorporates strength training and plyometrics. Exercising at home makes it easier to exercise at any time, providing a convenient solution to staying active during the winter.

Resources

- American College of Exercise: www.acefitness.org
- President's Council on Fitness, Sports & Nutrition: www.fitness.gov
- Health.gov: <http://health.gov>

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