

Health Tip: Winter Workouts

Exercise plays a big role in good health: the benefits are visible, tangible and enjoyable! Yet, more than 60% of American adults are not regularly active. The American Heart Association advises all healthy adults ages 18–65 to get at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity activity five days of the week.

In the winter months, it can be challenging to get motivated to get moving, but, exercise is very important during this time. Exercise helps you manage your weight and stress, as well as increase energy. Another benefit of winter workouts is a boost to your immune system. Studies show that people who exercise regularly get 20 to 30 percent fewer colds than those who don't exercise.

During the cold months, there is no shortage of exercise options. Some may be inspired by the Olympians to try skiing or snowboarding (burn up to 600 calories in an hour!). Others may prefer to workout indoors. Choose a wide range of activities to stay motivated.

Indoor winter workouts to stay fit and healthy:

- **Yoga:** Join the 11 million Americans who enjoy the health benefits of yoga. While some yoga classes are designed purely for relaxation, there are many styles of yoga that get your body moving. Yoga helps to develop your flexibility, strength, and balance.
- **Stair climbing:** Climbing the stairs of your house or office building helps build muscles in the legs. In thirty minutes, you could burn approximately 300 calories.
- **Exercise equipment:** A treadmill or stationary bike at home or at the gym offers cardio workouts for all fitness levels. Walking, running or cycling builds strength and endurance. To beat boredom, listen to music or watch the Winter Olympics.
- **Swimming:** During the winter months, swimming is a great way to stay fit. Swimming is a whole-body workout, using major muscle groups, such as the shoulders, back, abdominals, legs, hips, and glutes. Water cushions stiff joints or fragile bones; it has a low impact for people with arthritis, musculoskeletal, or weight limitations.
- **Pilates:** Pilates uses controlled movements in the form of mat exercises or equipment to tone and strengthen the body. Adults and kids experience improvements in range of motion, flexibility, circulation, posture, and abdominal strength. It may also help alleviate back pain.

If you decide to brave the elements, you just need to plan ahead. For an enjoyable outdoor workout:

- **Layer it on.** Exercise generates enough heat to make you feel like it is 30 degrees warmer than it really is. At the same time, once you start to tire and the sweat dries, you can get chilled. Dress in layers that you can remove as soon as you start to sweat and then put back on as needed. Don't forget your gloves and hat or headband.
- **Choose appropriate gear.** Choose footwear with enough traction to prevent falls. If it's dark, wear reflective clothing. Wear a helmet for sports such as skiing and snowboarding.
- **Remember sunscreen.** It is easy to get sunburned in winter, even more so if you're exercising in the snow. Wear sunscreen and use a lip balm that contains sunscreen. Protect your eyes from snow and ice glare with dark glasses or goggles.
- **Drink water.** In all exercise activity, drink plenty of water. You can become dehydrated in the cold from sweating, breathing and increased urine production. Water has many valuable benefits, including keeping your skin hydrated during the cold winter months.

Almost everyone can exercise safely in the cold, but if you have health concerns, check with your doctor first.

Sources: Mayo Clinic, American Heart Association, and Washington and Shady Grove Adventist Hospitals. The Health Tip of the Week is for educational purposes only. For additional information, consult your physician. Please feel free to copy and distribute this health resource.