

## 11 Ways to Stay Active in Winter

Source: [Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada](#)

Don't huddle by the fireplace! These active ideas will help get you moving and feeling your best.

The excuses you make to yourself over the next few months may range from, "It's too cold to work out!" to "I'm too busy for activity!" Yes, it can be tough to get motivated when the wind is howling or the snow is blowing, but don't give up all thoughts of staying active – indoors or out. A little planning will help you get through the winter months ahead. Here are some ideas:

### **Find a fun activity**

As the seasons change, explore new outdoor activities such as cross-country skiing and snow-shoeing.

### **Insulate your body**

The best approach to dressing for outdoor activity is with layers. Layering provides the most effective way to stay warm and dry. Plus you can remove the top layer if you get too hot. The layer closest to your skin should allow moisture to be wicked away; avoid cotton because once it gets wet, it tends to stay wet. The top layer should be both wind- and water-resistant.

### **Keep your clothes on**

While you may be tempted to immediately remove layers when you go back inside, give your body time to adjust. If you are not wet, wait 10 to 15 minutes before changing into other clothes. If you lose heat from your body too quickly, you may experience post-exercise hypothermia, which is a result of the body reducing its production of heat while rapidly losing its existing heat stores.

### **Drink up**

It's just as important to stay hydrated when active in winter as it is in summer, even though you might not feel as thirsty. Drink water before, during and after an outdoor workout. Smart tip: carry a thermos with herbal tea.

### **Use daylight hours**

If possible, it's best to be active outdoors while it is still light out. But shorter days may make that difficult. If you choose to work out while it's dark, try to wear reflective materials on your clothing to stay safe.

**Walk at an indoor location, like a mall**

If you need extra motivation to get yourself going, join a walking group. Or start your own with family and friends.

**Create a home gym**

You can easily set up a great workout area in your living room or basement and buy some inexpensive equipment such as stretch bands and a stability ball.

**Climb stairs**

Either at home or in your workplace, spend as little as five minutes at a time climbing up and down the stairs for a very intense and efficient workout.

**Visit a library**

Sign out free exercise DVDs, including dance, step, aerobics and Pilates programs. When returning a DVD, choose another kind of exercise to keep you motivated.

Before starting any activity program, be sure to talk to your doctor or other healthcare professional.