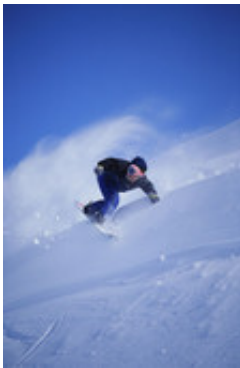


Keeping cold-weather exercise fresh, not frozen

January 8 2013



When the going gets cold, the cold get going, experts say

(HealthDay)—When the mercury hits the freezing mark and the snow starts to fall, routine exercise habits may be among the first things to freeze over. But this year a couple of fitness experts are standing up to Mother Nature by stressing the importance of staying active during the winter months.

"It's hard to stay motivated in the [winter](#)," Kara Smith, a personal trainer and group fitness coordinator at the Loyola Center for Fitness in Maywood, Ill., acknowledged in a Loyola news release. "When temperatures plummet, the last thing we want to do is leave the comfort and warmth of our homes. But winter is not a good excuse to give up our fitness routines."

Smith and colleague Valerie Walkowiak—the center's medical fitness-integration coordinator—note that with winter comes the opportunity to engage in seasonal sports, such as hockey, ice skating, skiing and snowshoeing.

"(And) your outdoor running and walking routines don't have to go away when it's cold, just modify it a little," Walkowiak suggested in the release. "Winter can be a great time for outdoor activity if you're prepared."

To that end, Walkowiak urges exercisers to dress for the weather: hats, scarves, warm (even thermal) socks, waterproof shoes, and lots and lots of layers.

The experts note that proper layering is something of an art. They suggest that the first layer (closest to the skin) should be made of a [synthetic material](#) (like [polypropylene](#)), rather than cotton, in order to minimize sweat contact. Fleece or wool is a good bet as an insulating second layer, whereas a third top layer should ideally be made of a waterproof and breathable cloth. By contrast, heavy jackets are a no-no, given the propensity to overheat during activity.

Hydration is also key to a good winter exercise experience, they add, as the cold season is also the dry season. And to keep up motivation in the absence of daylight and sun, they suggest pairing up with a partner and perhaps even changing gyms, all with an eye to keeping things as fresh and exciting as possible.

And remember, said Smith: "Winter doesn't last forever, so stop hibernating and get out and enjoy what each season has to offer."

More information: For more on cold-weather exercise, visit [America On the Move](#).

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