

Exercise safely when the weather outside is frightful

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(HealthDay)—If you're exercising outdoors this winter, take special

precautions, a sports medicine expert advises.

With winter's chill upon us, it's become increasingly important to check the [weather conditions](#)—including the forecast and wind chill—before starting out. Then, adjust your clothes accordingly, suggested Dr. Theodore Shybut, an assistant professor of [orthopedic surgery](#) at the Baylor College of Medicine in Houston.

Start by dressing in layers. This will keep you warm and let you take off clothing as needed to prevent overheating, Shybut recommended in a Baylor news release.

"Usually it is OK to feel slightly cold when you first step out," he said. "Once you're actually exercising and warmed up, you're going to generate a lot of heat, so you're trying to find the right amount of clothing.

"You want to be warm enough so you're not risking frostbite or any kind of cold injury," Shybut said. "If you're overdressed and you sweat excessively, it's going to waterlog your clothing, which will make you colder as your sweat freezes."

He suggested clothing made of moisture-wicking high-performance fabrics, rather than cotton. Your outer layer should be wind-resistant, or waterproof and breathable if it's raining or snowing.

Always wear a hat. It's also important to have your hands and feet properly covered. And, some weather conditions make it important to also cover your face and ears.

If you plan to be out for a long time, consider carrying an extra set of dry clothing, socks and gloves that you can change into if needed.

But there's more to think about than clothing.

Even in cold weather, you're going to lose fluid and will need to hydrate as you normally would, Shybut said.

Also wear footwear that's appropriate for slippery conditions, he advised. Slow down and be extra careful when changing direction or running on uneven surfaces.

If you're exercising outdoors at night, wear reflective [clothing](#) and a safety light, Shybut recommended. It's also a good idea to wear a headlamp to help you see better.

More information: The American Osteopathic Association outlines how to [stay active in the winter](#).

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