



818 18th Street, NW • Suite 1000 • Washington, DC 20006  
202.728.7199 • fax: 202.728.7238 • [www.womenheart.org](http://www.womenheart.org)

## **New Year's Resolution #1: Get more exercise**

### *How to meet your goals when the weather outside is frightful*

Vowing to exercise is regularly in the top five of New Year's resolutions, along with losing weight and quitting smoking; maybe those are also on your list — and starting with exercise can help you meet those other important goals. However, January can be a daunting time to begin a new fitness regime, especially when gray clouds are gathering outside, the wind is whistling around the windows and that down comforter is just so inviting. The last thing you feel like doing is putting on sweats and sneakers and heading out into the winter weather; all those nagging chores that you've been putting off start looking pretty good by comparison. There's no question that it's a lot easier to get out the door on a sunny spring morning.

Staying on track with exercise is a year-round commitment for any woman with heart disease. The problem is that we all tend to feel guilty when we get off track, and that creates an additional complication, by increasing production of the stress hormone cortisol, which can lead to higher blood pressure, blood sugar imbalance, and increased abdominal fat. To avoid these pitfalls, here are some tips to help you keep up the pace, even when the weather doesn't cooperate:

- **Change your routine with the weather.** Even if you don't live in the frozen north, your geographic area may still experience more rain and wind during the winter months along with shorter daylight hours. Take advantage of the season by trying out a new indoor exercise — such as swimming, yoga, ballroom dancing, or even a self-defense course. If you are not inclined to work out with others, then pop an exercise video into the DVD player — most public libraries offer a wide variety — or do some strength-training exercises during the commercials when you're watching television. That's an easy way to add 20 minutes of exercise while you're catching up on "House"!
- **Raise money for a good cause.** Sometimes having a goal is a great motivator, so consider joining a fundraising walk-a-thon, 5K race, or other event to support a cause that has great meaning to you. Find an event that will take place in the spring, so that you will have no choice but to train during the winter months, and get a group of friends together to train with you — you'll raise more money as a team and be able to keep each other on pace even on the most dreary days. There are many events out there that raise much-needed funds for leukemia, breast cancer, and other important causes; for a cause that's close to your own heart, you may want to check out the **American Heart Association's Heart Walk**. Hundreds of these fundraising walks take place across the United States throughout the year, so you can find one that is in your

area or even plan a trip to participate in one in another part of the country.

- **Change your playlist.** Sounds simple, but it's effective. If you listen to an iPod or MP3 player while exercising, you may tend to gravitate to the same songs over and over again. Try changing up your tunes to classic winter songs such as "Winter Wonderland" or "Baby, It's Cold Outside" for a fun escape from the everyday. Some of our other cold weather favorites? The Bangles' version of "Hazy Shade of Winter", REO Speedwagon's "Keep the Fire Burning", and — for something completely different — "Snowblind" by Black Sabbath.

- **Be less efficient.** Yes, that's what we said. Strap on a pedometer and get in those extra steps by "forgetting" to bring the laundry basket downstairs, parking farther away from the mall entrance, and taking a trip down the hall to a co-worker's desk instead of sending an e-mail. You'd be surprised how much walking you can pack into your day simply by doing things the old-fashioned way, like taking the stairs instead of the elevator or walking to the corner store for a quart of milk.

*Please remember to check with your doctor before beginning any new fitness routine. For more advice on how to stay fit during the winter, check out these links:*

**Exercise and cold weather: Stay motivated, fit and safe**

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/fitness/HQ01681>

**Train the Mind to Run Right Through Winter**

[http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/12/health/nutrition/12best.html?\\_r=2](http://www.nytimes.com/2009/11/12/health/nutrition/12best.html?_r=2)

**Winter Exercises: Five Tips for a Fun, Feel-Good & Fit Winter!**

[http://www.fitwoman.com/fitbriefings/5\\_tips.shtml](http://www.fitwoman.com/fitbriefings/5_tips.shtml)

**5 Ways to Avoid the Winter Exercise Blues**

<http://ezinearticles.com/?5-Ways-to-Avoid-the-Winter-Exercise-Blues&id=126561>