

Fun Fact of the Week

5 Best Tips for Getting Dressed to Exercise in Cold Weather*

You don't have to sideline your workout for winter

The mercury may be falling soon, but that doesn't mean you have to sideline your outdoor workout for the winter. A little preparation can go a long way toward full enjoyment and high performance levels during colder weather.

Proper attire can help you maintain your core body temperature and reduce cold weather-related risks. Keep these five tips in mind to make sure Old Man Winter doesn't sideline your sport this season:



1. Pile on the layers

Layering is your best winter sports strategy. The layer closest to your skin should be a moisture-wicking material, like lightweight polyester or polypropylene, to take moisture away from your skin to the outer layers to evaporate. The second layer is the insulating layer, which should be wool or polyester fleece. The third, outer layer needs to be wind and rain-repellent. When exercising in the cold, this third layer should be removed unless it is raining, snowing or very windy. If worn during exercise, this layer can trap [sweat](#) and not allow for proper evaporation. You can always put the top layer back on during rest times outdoors.

2. Cover your head

Be sure to cover your head with a [hat](#) or helmet to decrease heat loss.

3. The mitten/glove decision

If finger dexterity is not important for your cold weather activity of choice, wear [mittens](#) instead of gloves. If gloves are necessary, consider wearing a thin liner under the gloves for better insulation.

4. Protect your feet

Dry, warm feet are essential for decreasing the risk of a cold-weather injury and preventing blisters. Socks should wick moisture away from your [feet](#) to your boot. Avoid cotton socks. Cotton keeps moisture next to the skin. More appropriate fabrics include wool or synthetic fibers with moisture-wicking capability.

5. Don't forget about fit

If you layer socks, be sure your [boot](#) is large enough to ensure proper circulation.

Other factors to consider

Besides your choice in clothing, other factors to consider in preparing for cold weather exercise are fitness level and age.

A higher physical fitness level does not directly improve your body's ability to regulate temperature in the [cold](#). But it can allow people to exercise for longer periods of time at a higher intensity, which can help maintain core body temperature.

People older than 60 — as well as children — are at an increased risk of [hypothermia](#). If this is you, use extra caution when being active outside in the cold. Be sure to follow the above tips, avoid getting wet and keep your hat and gloves on at all times.

Hypothermia is when your body's core temperature falls to lower than 95 degrees. It happens when your body can't produce enough energy to keep your body's internal temperature warm enough.

Symptoms include:

- decrease in blood flow to the skin
- increase in heat production through shivering
- lowered dexterity that can inhibit performance in activities that require catching, throwing or marksmanship
- needing more energy to exercise

Keep the weather in mind

It's also important to make sure you take steps to avoid a fall on slippery ice or snow. Be aware of the weather, and keep in mind that ice is likely if it's 32 degrees or colder outside.

Wear proper footwear and select shoes or boots with a good tread. Make sure the surface that you are exercising on is shoveled and de-iced.

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* <https://health.clevelandclinic.org/5-tips-dressing-cold-weather-exercise/>