

10 Winter Workout Tips to Keep Your Bones, Muscles & Ligaments Healthy

Without proper warm-up, cold weather can contribute to injury during daily exercise – but that doesn't mean you should tone down your fitness routine.

Here are 10 tips for conditioning your bones, muscles, and ligaments for a winter-savvy outdoor workout:

1. Cold temperatures tighten your muscles, so do your core exercises and warm-ups inside: 20 squats, 20 heel raises, 10 lunges with each leg.
2. Dress in layers, with a sweat-wicking garment next to your skin, and peel down as you warm up. Put your clothes on right out of the dryer for a toasty start.
3. Put on a hat, gloves and socks to protect your head, hands and feet from releasing too much body heat, which will chill your muscles, bones and ligaments and make them susceptible to injury.
4. Cold weather inhibits your thirst mechanism, so stay hydrated even if you don't feel thirsty to prevent cramping and early fatigue. Warm liquids can also help you stay warm.
5. Adjust to the cold weather by starting out the season with shorter workouts and gradually lengthening activity periods.
6. Be careful when walking or running on icy pavement and snow or participating in winter sports. These activities have a higher risk of orthopedic injuries.
7. After exercising, go back inside to cool down and stretch: target your calves, hamstrings, quads, and hip flexors.
8. To reduce the risk of a pulled muscle, match your activity level to the temperature. The colder the weather, the slower you should warm up and the easier you should exercise.
9. Properly gauge the temperature, including wind-chill. If it's too cold outside, go for a walk in an indoor mall or take a run on the treadmill.
10. If you exercise in the cold for a long time, watch for any signs of hypothermia, such as dizziness, fatigue, increased breathing and heart rate, and poor judgment.