

Training Tip #27

Winter Weather Training Tips

Though the weather outside may be frightful, training can still be delightful! Follow these tips and you can build your walking endurance while staying safe and healthy.

- Select routes that are cleared of snow or ice or do not have standing puddles or mud slicks.
- Walk on sidewalks. If sidewalks are not shoveled, walk against the flow of traffic.
- Use caution when walking on roads; cars may have more difficulty seeing you in rain or snow and maneuvering around you.
- Plan for refuge along the way. Is there a store, park restroom or other place you can duck into to warm up during your walk if needed?
- Consider indoor walking alternatives: mall walking, treadmills, indoor tracks, stair climbing.
- If it is windy, try to arrange your route into the wind outbound and returning with the wind at your back. Select routes sheltered from the wind where possible.
- Warm up longer at a moderate pace before switching to your fast pace.
- You need water in winter as much as in summer, and drinking fountains may be turned off. Bring water along to stay hydrated.
- Stretch inside before and after walking.
- Long underwear bottoms or tights underneath another pair of pants will keep you warm. Cotton and denim should be avoided. Running pants or running tights made of synthetics that wick moisture will keep you more comfortable in rain and snow.
- Your base layer should wick sweat away from your body to keep your skin dry. Cotton should not be used. Good long underwear pieces are appropriate if made from fabrics such as Thermion[®], polypropylene, Thermax[®], Thinsulate[®] and silk.
- Your outer layer should protect you from the elements. Wear a windproof and water-resistant jacket. For extra warmth, add an insulating layer underneath of wool, fleece or down.
- A hat is essential to keeping your body heat from escaping, as well as keeping moisture out. A polar fleece hat with ear coverings makes for perfect winter headgear.
- Mittens will keep your hands the warmest, as the fingers work together to build up warmth. Look for windproof mittens.
- The earth is closer to the sun December–February, so protect your skin. Lips and face can chap and burn without sun protection.
- If your walk is wet or snowy, invest in a pair of waterproof shoes with good traction. Many companies have lightweight styles to keep you dry. Coating shoes with a water repellent fabric treatment is another option.
- Switch to heavier socks or wear two pairs for more insulation. Test your socks with your chosen shoes to make sure there is still room for your toes to wiggle.
- If your walking route is away from home, bring along a set of warm and dry clothes to slip into immediately after walking to keep from getting chilled by wearing wet walking clothes.
- Plan for a nice, warm drink when you finish. Also, a long, warm bath will take away the chill and relax your exercised muscles.