

Lifestyle Tips



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Seasonal Variations in Physical Activity

Baby, it's cold outside! And for many Canadians, that means a decrease in their physical activity levels. But cold weather is no excuse to be inactive. In fact, Canadian winters offer a wide range of exciting activities that you can't do in the warmer seasons. Try some of these:

- Tobogganing – Flying down the hill is exhilarating and walking back up the hill is a great workout.
- Building a snowman – This is not only a physical exercise, but a creative one. Get out the scarves and accessories and use your imagination.
- Skating – Check your area for outdoor rinks, or consider building one in your own backyard.
- Skiing or snowboarding– Cross-country or downhill skiing and snowboarding offer a great way to enjoy the outdoors.

While the winter offers exciting physical activity opportunities, if you're not careful, cold temperatures can bring hypothermia and frostbite. Remember to dress warmly, and if you happen to



experience any of the following signs, seek shelter and medical attention:

- Grey or blue facial skin
- Cold, hard and white skin
- Numb patches on the skin
- Swollen and blistering skin
- Uncontrollable shivering, followed by lack of shivering
- Loss of physical coordination
- Speaking difficulties, such as slurring
- Loss of control over small

muscles—for example, the muscles of the fingers

- A strong yearning for sleep

If you're going to get active outdoors in the winter, SMARTRISK http://www.smartrisk.ca/seasonal_tips/preventing_frostbite_and_hypothermia.html offers some advice on how to prevent cold-related injuries.



Remember C-O-L-D:

- **C - Cover** your head, neck and face, since they are major sites of heat loss. Wear hats, scarves and mittens—and remember lip protection.
- **O - Overexertion** leads to sweating, which causes damp or wet clothing and causes you to become chilled more quickly.
- **L - Layer** clothing to protect

against wind and cold. Start with a snug inner layer that allows sweat to escape, such as thin, synthetic long underwear. The second, insulating layer should be loose and warm, such as a wool or fleece sweater. The third layer should be windproof and waterproof.

- **D - Dry.** Wear waterproof clothing and insulated, waterproof boots and gloves. Ensure they are not too tight, as this could decrease circulation to your hands or feet, raising the risk of frostbite.

- Living room calisthenics – Put down a mat or blanket on your living room floor and do some sit-ups and push-ups.

Including both outdoor and indoor activities in your winter physical activity routine will help you stay active and healthy throughout the year—whatever the weather!



On days when even the polar bears want to be inside, consider some of the following options:

- Mall walk – Go to the mall to walk a few laps. Just remember that you're there to walk, and not window shop!
- Swimming – Go to your local pool and swim lengths during lane swimming, or play and splash about during a free swim.
- Basketball or volleyball – Look for drop-in programs at your neighbour hood school or community centre.
- Indoor active recess – Parents: encourage your child's school to provide active recess alternatives during bad weather days. Students: join lunch time intramurals or volunteer to organize them at your school.

