

Don't let winter put a freeze on your fitness routine

Colder temps and fewer daylight hours can send us into hibernation during the winter months. Decreased physical activity can lead to a domino effect of unhealthy habits and side effects, such as fatigue, depression, stiff muscles and poor sleep.

Instead of hiding out until spring, now is the time to incorporate some cold-weather activities into your daily fitness routine. The following ideas can help you lose weight or maintain a healthy weight while working your muscles in new ways:

- **Hit the slopes.** Downhill skiing and snowboarding are great ways to torch calories this winter. Skiing also targets your thighs, calves, core and arm muscles, making it a great full-body workout. Before heading downhill, try some dynamic movements first, like squats, leg swings and cross-body reaches. This will help get your muscles limber and ready to go.
- **Try the trails instead.** If you prefer a flatter course with a slower pace, cross-country skiing may be a better choice. Depending on your weight and how fast you go, you may burn 400-900 calories per hour. This activity recruits the same muscles as downhill skiing, plus your triceps, biceps, hips, glutes and back muscles as well!
- **Shovel snow.** We all probably need to do this at some point anyway, so instead of dreading the shovel, think of it as your cardio and strength workout for the day. To stay safe, be sure to bend at your knees, lift straight up and do not throw the snow over your shoulder, especially if the snow is heavy and wet. By clearing your driveway and sidewalks, you can burn significant calories.
- **Winter walking.** If you are looking to increase your calorie burn, just step out into the cold for your walk. Your body needs extra energy to keep your core temperature warm, which burns more calories. And if you are chilly, it may prompt you to pick up your pace. Be sure to wear shoes or boots with good traction to avoid slipping and try to choose routes that are free of ice.

Other fun ways you and your family can stay physically active over the next couple of months include sledding (climb your way to the top to work your glute muscles and get your heart pumping), snow shoeing (move across the deep snow while working your legs) and ice skating (test your balance and grace while improving your endurance, strength and stamina).

Don't let a little frost keep you from feeling your best. Bundle up in some warm clothes and try out a few of these ideas to keep your body strong and heart healthy this winter.

