

Take These Weather-Wise Steps to Exercise



If you live in a climate with distinctly different seasons, you're lucky: You can vary your fitness program with changing conditions. But weather adds more than interest to your routine; it can affect your body's response to exercise. An exercise done comfortably in one season—like jogging in the spring or fall, for instance—can become unpleasant, or even dangerous, if pursued in summer and winter without allowing for hotter or colder temperatures.

In cold, wintry weather:

- Try to cover up all exposed skin on windy, chilly days.
- Wear a wool hat. You can lose up to 40 percent of your body heat through your head if it's not covered.
- Wear three to five layers of lightweight clothing rather than a single layer or two of heavy clothing. A layer of lightweight polypropylene next to the skin keeps moisture from collecting and chilling you.
- Move against the wind on your way out and with the wind on your way home. You'll be cutting down on the wind-chill factor when you're perspiring the most.

- Try to avoid running in open areas. Town houses, office buildings, and homes in subdivisions can help to block chilling winds.
- Avoid smoking cigarettes or drinking beverages that contain caffeine or alcohol; such substances increase your susceptibility to the cold.

In warm weather:

- Wear lightweight, loose clothing that allows sweat to evaporate easily. Don't wear long-sleeved or full-length sweat suits in hot, humid weather. And don't wear rubberized clothing which prevents evaporation of sweat, the body's way of keeping you cool. Use a sunscreen to avoid sunburn.
- Exercise at a moderate pace.
- Drink at least 8 to 10 ounces of plain water 10 to 15 minutes before you start to exercise. And to compensate for fluids lost through perspiration, drink water during your workout, even if you don't feel thirsty.
- Work out in the cooler parts of the day—early morning or after sundown.