

Cultural Daily

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A Guide to Winter Cardio

Marie Miguel · Thursday, December 3rd, 2020

In many places, the temperatures are dropping, making you unsure if you want to go outside or not. And seeing as how in many places, the gym is not open or you're nervous about going, it can be tempting to be sedentary.

Sure, we have exercise bikes, treadmills, and other machines you can add to your home, but a good one tends to cost a lot and you may live in a space that is too small for that. In some cases, you may feel like you have no choice but to run outside.

Outdoor [fitness](#) is actually good for you. In this post, we will explain why and then give you tips on how you can run outside.

Why is it Good for You?

Going outside to run can be good for you in many different ways. Let's look at some of them.

It's Good for the Heart

When you run outside in the cold, your heart has to work a little more to get the blood pumping. If you have heart issues, you may want to avoid doing this. However, if you are someone who has a healthy heart, it can keep your heart stronger. If heart issues run in your family, this can help you to prevent them.

It's a Calorie Burner

When you run outside in the cold, your body has to maintain its temperature. It works harder to do so, thus more calories burnt. In a season where you may be eating more, a good calorie burner can save you a lot of trouble.

It Can Help You Build a Tolerance to the Cold

Many people do not want to run outside because it's very cold. However, you may find out that you'll soon adjust to it, and it gets easier over time. Not to mention, when you run, your body is heating up already.

Sun Exposure

The sun is important for many reasons. For one thing, many of us do not get enough sun during the

winter, when the sun may set before 5 PM. Being exposed to the sun can regulate sleep cycles and provide you with vitamin D.

Running outside is also a good antidepressant. In a season when more people end up being depressed, running outside can lift up those spirits. While not a magic cure-all, it's a part of a regimen that can help you quite a bit. By giving you more endorphins, regulating your sleep cycle, and getting the body moving, it's indeed valuable.

How to Survive the Outdoors

It can be difficult to work out in the cold without feeling uncomfortable. If you are elderly or have preexisting conditions, it can be dangerous, too. Here are some tips.

Stay Hydrated

When you work out in the cold, sweat isn't as prevalent, but you are still sweating. Hydrate yourself before and after in order to stay safe.

Stretch Beforehand

Doing some stretches can warm up the body and keep it limber when you are out running.

How to Dress

It's important to know how to dress when you are going out running. There are several considerations to make.

For one thing, avoid wearing cotton clothes, as this can absorb your sweat and absorb any water such as rain or snow. This can make your body colder, making your risk of hypothermia worse. Look for clothes that say "sweat wicking" on them.

Obviously, bundling up is a step you need to take. Wear a sweat-wicking base and then add different layers to warm you up. Look to vests to protect against snow, wind, rain, etc. Don't forget gloves, hats, and other ways to keep you warm. Once you run, you may realize that you're nice and toasty.

In that case, you may want to remove some layers if you feel too warm. Make sure you can remove any layers easily when you're out. By sweating too much, it can lead to several issues.

For shoes, you should ideally run in areas that are plowed or salted. If you have to run on snow or ice, look for snow spikes. Just don't run with those on if you're running on pavement.

Finally, it's important that you wear some brighter clothes, too. Bright clothes can make you more visible in a season of invisibility.

Keep Your Skin Protected

It's important for you to rub moisturizer on your sensitive spots. In addition, you may want to put on some sunblock as well. Yes, even in the cold, you can get skin damage. What some may not realize is that the sun's rays can bounce off snow, burning your body. Don't think that it being colder means that your skin is magically protected from the sun's rays. This is rarely the case for

many.

Running in the Wind

When you are running, it's important for you to consider wind chill. It can feel much cooler and increase hypothermia risk. Try to run towards the wind at first so that when you're running back, you don't have to deal with the wind causing you to lose sweat.

Know Your Limits

With fitness, it's always good to push yourself a little harder each time. However, if you feel uncomfortable, do not do it. It's okay for you to have shorter workouts if it means you won't be affected as much by the cold. If you plan on running long distances, make sure you can call a ride if you feel like you can't do it anymore. Alternatively, make sure there is some shelter you can go to should you feel too cold or overwhelmed.

Seek Help

Being indoors a lot more can cause many different mental health issues. Working out can help you with some of those, but it's not the only solution. Another solution is to look to online therapy. Websites such as [BetterHelp](#) allow you to connect with a therapist or counselor. There, you can get a treatment plan, discuss any issues you have, and even create exercise goals.

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