

# Blue Cross® VIRTUAL WELL-BEING

## Stay active in winter

The average American gains five to 10 pounds each winter. During the colder and darker months, we tend to exercise less and eat more comfort food than we do in spring or summer. The cold weather can keep some from exercising outside, but there are some positive reasons to go outside and exercise during the winter:

- Boost immunity
- Improve mood
- Expend more energy
- Change white fat to brown fat

If you decide to exercise or play outside, there are some winter-specific safety tips to keep in mind:

- Know what the weather is going to be like so you can be prepared.
- Know the symptoms of frostbite and hypothermia.
- Dress appropriately for the weather. Make sure you protect your head, hands, feet and ears. Dress in layers so you can remove a layer if you get too warm.
- Wear sunscreen and lip balm because it's easy to get sunburned in the winter, especially if you're exercising in snow.
- Use safety gear, depending on the activity you're doing.
- Stay hydrated before, during and after your workout. It may be harder to notice signs of dehydration during cold weather.
- Warm up before you enjoy your cold-weather workout, and monitor how your body feels so you can adjust the intensity and length of your workout accordingly.
- Let someone know your route or where you're going and your estimated time to return home in case something goes wrong.



The American Heart Association suggests the following outdoor activities to work out during the winter:

- Walking, jogging or hiking
- Ice skating
- Sledding
- Cross-country skiing
- Downhill skiing
- Snowboarding
- Snowshoeing
- Shoveling snow
- Playing in the snow

If you don't think exercising outside in the winter is right for you, there are many indoor options:

- Mall walking
- Taking classes at your local gym
- Bowling
- Active housework such as vacuuming or mopping
- Dancing
- Playing actively with your family or pets
- Yoga
- Stair climbing
- Using in-home exercise equipment or online fitness classes

Always talk to your doctor before you start an exercise program or increase your exercise activity to make sure it's safe for you.

Sources: [heart.org](https://www.heart.org)\*, [mayoclinic.org](https://www.mayoclinic.org)\*, [health.harvard.edu](https://www.health.harvard.edu)\*

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