Cold Weather Exercise & Goal Setting

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Learning Objectives

Cold Weather Exercise & Goal Setting

• Learn how your body reacts in cold weather
• Understand cold weather hazards
• Discover how to stay active in cold weather
• Take steps to be prepared for cold weather
• Learn how to prioritize goals and clarify your values
• Understand barriers to meeting our goals
• Change your habits by setting goals
• Review tips for setting goals
Your Body in **Cold Weather**

- **Blood pressure** increases as well as heart rate
  - Extended periods can lead to heart rate slowing down and blood pressure decreasing
  - **Vasoconstriction** of small arteries to redirect blood from peripheral to the core
    - To protect your organs/brain
- **Brain** sends defensive command to body during cold weather
  - **Shivering** increases metabolic rate

[www.nih.gov/pubmed](http://www.nih.gov/pubmed)
Cold Weather Hazards

• Hypothermia
  – Signs/Symptoms: chills, fatigue, pain in fingers/toes, weak pulse, shivering, unconsciousness

• Frostbite
  – Freezing of body tissue
  – *Frost Nip*: body tissue is not frozen but is very cool

*Without proper and immediate attention, these hazards could result in loss of tissue, limbs and even death.*

*These conditions can be prevented with the appropriate preparation!*
Staying Active in Cold Weather

Be Smart

• Exercise can be done safely in cold weather with the right preparation
  – Seek out an area that has structures such as buildings/houses and/or trees to block excess wind

Layer Up

• It’s easier to regulate increasing body temperature by peeling off layers vs. wearing one thick layer

Remove wet clothing

• Do this immediately to reduce onset of hypothermia and/or frostbite
Be prepared

Dress in Layers

• Inner layer should be synthetic (e.g. polypropylene) to keep skin dry by wicking water away
• Fleece or wool is a good insulating middle layer
  – This also helps remove moisture
• Waterproof yet breathable outer layer that will repel the wind

Head to Toe

• Wear a hat and thermal socks to keep the heat close to you
• If you have an option – wear mittens over gloves as your fingers can warm each other

Avoid using cotton next to skin
Be prepared

Stay Hydrated
• If you feel thirsty, you have already been dehydrated for awhile
• Chapped Lips = Dehydration
• Drink before, during and after exercise, no matter what time of year

Know the signs of frostbite and hypothermia
• Move indoors to finish exercise or discontinue immediately

www.move.va.gov
Ccmis.usph.gov
Goal Setting
Develop your vision

• What kind of person do you **want** to be when it comes to your health, fitness or wellness?

• What do you look and feel like at your best?

• What health-promoting, life-giving behaviors do you consistently **want** to be doing?

*Paint a vivid picture in your mind of what you want versus what you don’t want.*
Why do we have trouble meeting our goals?

- Unrealistic goals
- Not a priority
- **Personal values** do not match goals
- No clear action plan to achieve

Change is always possible.
Change a habit by setting goals

• Have your own **reason**
• Set **goals** you can reach
• **Prepare** for slip-ups
• Get **support**
Have your own reason

• **Why** do you want to make this change?
• On a scale from 1-10 (with 10 being very motivated), **how motivated** are you to make a change?
• How will this change **enhance your life**?
• Are you **ready** to make a change?
## Set goals you can reach

### Long-term
- Not something you can do at once
- Inspires you and will show you how far you’ve come when you complete it
- A goal you would like to reach in 6 months or a year

### Short-term
- Helps you accomplish your long-term goal
- Keeps you going day to day
- Goals you hope to reach tomorrow or next week
Tips for setting goals

• Focus on small **goals**
• Write down your **goals**
• Make your **goals** specific
• Focus on one **goal** at a time
• When you reach a **goal**, reward yourself

**You can adjust your goals as needed!**
Start by setting a SMART Goal

• **S**pecific
  – How will I do it?

• **M**easurable
  – How often will I do it and when?

• **A**ttainable/Achievable/Action-based
  – What actions will I take?

• **R**ealistic
  – Am I confident I can do this?

• **T**imely
  – When will I start?
  – When will I end (when will I know that I achieved my goal)?
Tracking your behaviors to achieve goals

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Goal</th>
<th>Action</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lose weight</td>
<td>Keep a food diary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Exercise</td>
<td>Plan ahead by scheduling physical activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less stress</td>
<td>Write down your triggers for stress</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eat healthier</td>
<td>Track the number of fruits and vegetables you eat daily</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quit tobacco</td>
<td>Track smoking and triggers</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tracking your behaviors can help you stay aware and help you reach your goals.
Prepare for slip-ups

• Think about things that might cause a setback for you
• If you have tried to change a habit before, think about what helped you and what got in your way
• Planning ahead for these challenges can help you deal with them if they happen
• If there are slip-ups, **learn from your experience** — Do not get mad at yourself
Get support

• Get a **partner**

• Get friends and family **involved**

• Join a class or **support group**

• Give yourself positive **reinforcement**

• Get **professional help**
Stay focused on commitment, not just progress

• If you don’t see immediate results, **don’t get discouraged**
• Focus on **positive health benefits** from healthy changes
• Remember to take it **one day at a time**
• Have your values align with your **goals**
• It’s ok to adjust your **goals**
Remember Your Motivation

On a scale of 1–10...

How *important is* it to me to achieve my goal?

How *motivated* am I to achieve my goal?

How *willing am I to* do what it takes to achieve my goal?

How *confident am I* that I can meet my goal?
Summary

- You can exercise safely in cold weather
- Set goals you can reach
- Have your own reasons
- Prepare for slip-ups
- Get support
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