

Cold Weather - No Excuse!

Winter is not the time to forget about exercising - sure there are plenty of excuses not to exercise (too cold, too dark, too wet, no time, etc, etc, etc).

But that's all they are excuses. Stories you tell yourself to justify why you shouldn't exercise.

Here are some reasons and strategies to help you keep up your exercise routine through winter:



- Exercise boosts your immune system. In fact regular exercisers get 20-30 percent less colds!
- Dress in layers. As you start to warm up strip off a layer. At the end of your exercise session put the layers back on again as you cool down. For my first layer I like a tight thin synthetic sweat wicking material that helps to keep you dry. The next layer should again be something thin like a long sleeve synthetic blend t-shirt. Avoid 100% cotton materials as these tend to hold your perspiration and can become cold and wet. The next layer should be something fleecy to help with insulation. The last or outer layer can be a water resistant jacket made of a lightweight, breathable material. If the temperature is below zero consider wearing a scarf or mask that can help to warm up the air you breathe.
- Protect you extremities. Wear thin, light weight gloves, warm socks and a hat (up to 40% of your body heat can be lost through your head). Again these can be peeled off as you warm up and put on again as you cool down.
- If you exercise around dawn or dusk wear bright, reflective clothing. Stick to flat ground or paths to avoid unseen holes and trip hazards.
- Wear sunscreen. It is easy to get sunburn and wind burn in winter.
- Start your session by running into the wind. It's less likely you will get chilled when you are ending your workout if the wind is at your back.
- Drink plenty of water. You can become dehydrated even in cold climates. Drink even though you may not be thirsty. Water helps to regulate the body's temperature.



- Be aware of wind chill. Wind chill becomes significant on cold and windy days and with activities such as cycling. Wind that reaches your skin can lower the temperature quite dramatically. Some fabrics have wind stopping properties and I often wear a 'wind stopper' jacket and vest.
- Although you are unlikely to experience it while exercising in the Southern Highlands, be aware of frost bite and hypothermia. The warning signs of frost bite are paleness, numbness or stinging of your extremities. For hypothermia they are intense shivering, lack of co-ordination, slurred speech, tiredness and fatigue.
- Keep yourself motivated! Exercise gets you warm, increases your energy and cures the winter blues. AND you'll be looking and feeling fabulous when summer comes around again!

