

# Winter Motivation

I know for some of you the motivation to get out and exercise is decreasing each day and the appeal of a warm, comfy bed is becoming too strong. So how do you break out of this winter rut and find that motivation to exercise once again. Here are a few tips to help you survive the colder months:

Remember the big picture – before starting a health and fitness journey, you have a long term goal in mind. It might be weight loss, it might be to tone up, increase fitness, be healthier or maybe it is to maintain a consistent exercise routine. Don't let winter get in the way.

Exercising only 6 months of the year is only going to make it harder for you to reach these goals. Don't get to spring and regret doing nothing over winter, feeling like you are having to start all over again. Remember why you started and push through the colder months, you will reach your goals sooner and you will be much happier in the long term.

The key to keeping warm whilst exercising is the right active wear. Layers are a great idea so you can strip them back as you start to get warmer and put them back on as you start to cool down. The first layer needs to be light and breathable. Something made from silk or synthetics like polypropylene will draw sweat away from your body. Avoid cotton as it will absorb sweat and keep sweat close to the skin, making you feel colder. Follow this layer with an insulation layer to keep out the wind and the cold. Fleece is light, breathable and a great insulation layer. Then if it is super cold outside, another outer layer will help keep you warm enough to face the chill. A jacket of polyester blends is breathable to allow sweat to evaporate and is the perfect outer layer. Finally, think about your extremities. Toes and fingers are the first to get cold. Thin, lightweight gloves made from synthetic fibers will keep the hands warm. And thin woolen socks are best as cotton can leave your feet damp from sweat. And most importantly, don't forget your head... Heat escapes from your head so you want to keep as much heat in with a light beanie that covers the top of your head and your ears. When you start to get too hot, tuck it in your pocket and keep going.

Keep your workout short in length but high in intensity. Get the heart rate up quickly so your whole body starts to warm up. Keep it high for the entire session then get back home for a nice warm shower. Don't go for 4 hour hikes. 30-60 minute high intensity workouts are your best winter sessions.

Get yourself a training buddy, a personal trainer or an exercise group (for example a bootcamp) to keep you motivated and accountable. It is always easier to stick to a routine if you have someone to do it with. Don't let yourself down or your buddies/trainer down but hibernating for the winter. Use them for motivation to get out there and get it done. You will be proud of yourself for doing it and your buddy will be happy you helped keep them motivated too!

Most of all, focus on the benefits. You have spent the first few months of the year getting into a routine, keep it up. If you lose that routine now, you will lose fitness, lose strength and when you start back up in the warmer months, you will be back to square one. It will keep you happier and easier to fight off the winter blues. It will keep you focused on your healthy eating and less inclined to undo all that hard work you have put in running around in the cold. It will help keep your immune system at its peak to fight off the sniffles. So many benefits to exercising during the winter. And don't forget, to look good and feel great in summer, you have to work hard and stay motivated during the winter. So rug up and get out there, it will be worth it, I promise!!!