Tips for Cold and Wet Weather Physical Activity

Cold and rainy weather may make you feel like staying inside, but it doesn’t have to slow you down. Here are a few tips to help you stay active in the winter months.

Stay Inside.
- Not interested in a group setting, or unable to join a gym? There are many good exercise videos and DVDs that may meet your needs. The library is an excellent resource for exercise videos and DVDs as you can try many different options without breaking the bank.
- Teamwork! Partner with a friend to exercise together, you will keep each other motivated. Meet in the morning before work and go for a walk or a run. Have small children and can’t leave the home? There are plenty of parents just like you who would love to start a “play” group: Parents Living Actively – YES! Take turns watching the kids for 30-60 minutes as the rest of the group gets their physical activity time.
- Contact your local YMCA, senior center or community center. They often offer lower rates for individuals and families with limited resources. You may find a new activity that you love!

Go Outside.
- Check in with your doctor if you have any medical conditions such as asthma that can be made worse by cold air and exercise.
  - Dress in layers and keep away from cotton. Start with a thin layer of polypropylene that draws sweat away from your body and add a layer of wool or fleece to keep you warm. When the conditions are wet or windy, add a waterproof or windproof outer layer. Always wear a hat and gloves or mittens.
  - Be sure to drink plenty of water and wear sunscreen on sunny days! Snow reflects the sun’s rays, so sunburn is possible, even when you are cold. Cold air has a drying effect which can increase the risk of dehydration, so drink plenty of water – even if you are not thirsty.
- Use common sense. If the temperature is below zero or the wind chill is minus 20, stay indoors. Go for a walk in the mall, dance with your kids, or take a day off. Everyone deserves a break.

Winter weather doesn’t mean you need to stay indoors and settle in for a long winter’s nap. Exercise your options. It may take a little extra effort and creativity, but staying active through the winter can help control weight gain, maintain strength and stamina, and improve general well-being. You’ll be ready to blossom in the spring!