



Winter Running Safety

Dress For It

Start with a thin layer of synthetic material that will wick sweat from your body. Cotton should be avoided as it will hold in moisture and keep you wet. An outer, breathable layer of nylon or Gore-Tex will help protect you against wind, rain and snow, while still letting out a bit of heat and moisture to prevent overheating and chilling. If it's really cold out, you might be wise to also wear a middle layer of fleece for a bit more protection. Be sure to pay attention to wind chill as well. Brisk wind can really eliminate body warmth in a hurry.

Hands, Feet and Head Need Protection

Body heat escapes very quickly through your hands, feet and head. For your hands gloves or mittens are a good choice but on really cold days, mittens may be better as they allow your fingers to share their heat. To keep your feet warm, adding a wicking sock liner under a warmer fleece type sock is a good idea, but make sure that your shoes can accommodate these thicker socks. If you are a die-hard runner, you may want some shoes just for this purpose! Wearing a hat will stop heat loss for sure, but for really cold days you may want to invest in a running balaclava to protect you even more.

Watch for Frostbite

On really cold days, make sure you monitor your fingers, toes, ears, and nose. They may feel cold at first, but they should warm up a few minutes into your run. If there is a lot of wind chill or you are on a long run, make sure you look out for dry, flaky, areas. These could be frostbite and something you should seek professional care for.

Stay Hydrated

Despite the cold weather, you'll still heat up and lose fluids through sweat. Cold air also has a drying effect, which can increase your risk of dehydration. Make sure you drink water during, and after your run. If you had public drinking fountains to use in the warmer weather, they are most likely shut off in the winter, so be sure to carry water with you. Water gets cold quickly so it would be smart to pick up a hydration belt rather than carry the water in your hand.

Be Seen

For safety it is better to not run in the dark, but the winter really decreases the amount of daylight so you may not have a choice. Be sure to wear reflective gear and light-colored clothing. There are a number of companies that are making light up vests, clip on lights and head lamps to further help you both see and be seen. If you are running in the daylight and have to run on the shoulder of the road, be sure to dress in bright colors. When it's snowy or if there are big snow drifts, keep in mind that drivers may not expect to see runners out on the road or in crosswalks so you need to make sure they see you.

Wear Running Sunglasses

If you are running during the day, the glare from snow can actually cause snow blindness. This can be very painful and also affect your vision, so be sure to wear sunglasses that are polarized and have the max UV protection. If you are running in snow or other precipitation, wearing glasses with a yellow tint help brighten your vision and also protect your eyes. Being able to see is just as important as being able to be seen.

Remember Sunscreen and Lip Protection

Just because it's winter doesn't mean you can't still get a sunburn. In addition to the regular glare of the sun, snow reflects the sun's rays, exposing you from another angle. Also be sure to protect your lips with lip balm with UVA and UVB protection. This will help to prevent damage from both from the sun and from getting chapped due to wind and cold.

Be Safe When Running In Snowy and Icy Conditions

When your favorite running route is covered in snow, you can either retreat to the safety of a treadmill--or simply brave the elements. If you choose to venture outdoors, ice cleats work like tire chains for your shoes to significantly improve your traction across snow and icy surfaces. So whatever winter throws your way, the cleats will help you handle it.

Stretch When You're Done

Before you fully cool down, stretch for a few minutes while your muscles are still warm for your run. Your body will thank you later!