



## WINTERIZE YOUR WORKOUTS

With the arrival of the winter season, many people find it hard to stay in shape. However, keeping up with an exercise routine is important throughout the entire year. Here are some tips to keep you motivated when the weather turns colder.

- **Get outside.** Take advantage of the colder season by participating in activities you can only do this time of year, such as skiing, snowboarding, or ice skating.
- **Think variety.** If the weather is bad outside, stay motivated by introducing variety into your workouts. Try buying a new fitness toy such as a jump rope, exercise video, heart rate monitor, or stability ball.
- **Don't forget about fluids!** When working out in cold weather, it's harder to gauge your fluid loss. It's easy to become dehydrated. Fluid replacement is a must even in chilly weather!
- **Plan for indoor fitness.** Rain and snow are not excuses from exercise.

continued on page 3

## MAKE THE HOLIDAYS YOUR OWN

So it's that time of year again. You take one look at the calendar and you're hit with pictures of perfect holidays. There are kids playing in the snow, or big families laughing around a huge meal. You see couples exchanging gifts in front of the fireplace. The pressure is on to make the traditional holiday images come to life—or else!

But what about those people who aren't included in those snapshots? What if you are single, without little ones to decorate the Christmas tree or light menorah candles? More and more people are divorced and part of blended families. They are dealing with multiple traditions in the same house. The truth is that a lot of families today don't have two parents and 2.5 Norman Rockwell children. And for many people, the pressure becomes too much. If you don't belong in a traditional holiday portrait you can still make the holidays special by creating your own traditions.

### FIGURE OUT WHAT YOU WANT.

Basically, holiday stress is caused by unrealistic expectations. In one word, stress is should. During the holidays, everyone, particularly those people who don't live anywhere near "It's a Wonderful Life," could use a reminder to think about their own needs and

desires for this time of year and not focus on what they've come to believe they should do.

Before the holidays, spend some time with yourself. Set aside a couple of days to examine what you're really looking for during the holidays. If you had it your way, how would you paint the picture? Are the holidays about extended family, or about solitude? Is this the time to explore cultural roots and reconnect with religion, or a chance to reach out to strangers? Forget about what everyone else says or what your mother has always done. What do you want your holiday traditions to be?

### GOING ALONE, OR NOT.

If you're single, you might look into volunteering at a local soup kitchen, food bank, or homeless shelter. Or maybe you want to do something totally self-indulgent. What's stopping you from spending a day relaxing at a spa, hiking or biking, or hopping on a plane and enjoying the holidays at the beach? Rely upon your family or friends who may have all sorts of interesting things planned. Also, friends with kids are not off limits during the holidays. If you want to be around children, find the families in

continued on page 2



## MAKE THE HOLIDAYS YOUR OWN

continued from page 1

your circle who'll welcome a guest to a holiday meal, and then ask what you can contribute. Maybe you're helping them fulfill their tradition.

The holidays also tend to put extra pressure on new relationships, whether it's a new romance or a new family unit. Keep in mind that now is not the time to force things. Concentrate on what's truly at the core of the holidays for you, and find ways to embrace that together. Have fun. Chances are the new people in your life will feel relieved as well without having to rush into a situation loaded with expectations.

### BLENDING A FAMILY MEANS STAYING FLEXIBLE.

Blended families are faced with a particular challenge during the holidays. For kids and adults, thinking about past celebrations inevitably brings back memories, good and bad. It's important to talk about what each side of the family used to do, and what the new family can now do together to make the holidays special. Be flexible.

It may be combining traditions, or it may be starting fresh. Planning can get complicated if the holidays are divided between families, but kids often don't mind celebrating more than once—in a different way in each home—no matter what date the celebration happens to fall upon.

### MAKE A LIST OF NO'S.

It's important to know what you don't want. Come up with a list of the things that are not a part of your ideal holiday, even if you may not be able to realistically eliminate them. Do you really want to deal with expensive gifts this year? Must you make an appearance at your neighbor's annual party? Do you have to invite your husband's ex-wife over for dinner? Include everything that makes you nervous just thinking about it. Call it a *stress list*.

Then practice saying *no*. It may sound silly, but practice it in front of the mirror. You'll probably find out that it works remarkably well when the time comes. And if not, at least you spoke up.

### TIMING IS EVERYTHING.

If you decide to shake your holidays up a bit, you'll probably want to start planning early. Don't ambush your loved ones at the last minute by opting out of the family meal and announcing a solo trip to Mexico, or throw a new tradition at the kids on Christmas Eve. You may have shifted your outlook, but it could take some time for the rest of the world to join you.

Change isn't always easy, especially when people are bombarded with old-fashioned images of holidays past that probably were not ever quite real. But once you can let go of the unrealistic expectations, visualize what you need, and take the holidays into your own hands, you are one step closer to having a stress-free season truly worth remembering.

Workplace Options. (Reviewed 2013). Make the holidays your own. Raleigh, NC: Author.



## WINTERIZE YOUR WORKOUTS

continued from page 1

Plan ahead by finding an indoor location before you need it. Join a health club, buy a video, or look for local mall-walking opportunities.

- **Choose exercises that complement your summertime sport.** While basketball and swimming transfer easily to indoor venues, this is not true for all sports. If your favorite sport is golf or baseball, it may be harder to find winter opportunities to play. However, you can still keep in shape by choosing workouts that mimic motions used in your favorite sport to keep those muscles strong, flexible, and ready for spring.
- **Experiment with new and different indoor activities.** Try yoga, aerobics, or kickboxing—or any other indoor class you have wanted to try, but just couldn't bring yourself to do because the weather was so nice outside.
- **Layer, layer, layer!** Garments can then be removed and replaced as needed. The clothes next to your skin should absorb moisture and your outer layer should protect you from winds.
- **Adapt your gear to indoor fitness.** Don't just change your location. If you change your workout conditions, you may need to change your shoes and other equipment as well.
- **Don't forget your hat.** Hats are important to keep body temperature stable. Hats prevent heat loss from the head and neck, which can account for as much as 50% of total heat loss when you're outside.

## WARMING UP TO YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

### Tips for successfully getting the ball rolling early.

Rather than jumping in cold to a new lifestyle change, you may have more success preparing your mind and body before the new year begins. In fact, each January, fitness centers pack in new members who are intent on fulfilling their New Year's health goals. But within a few months, attendance drops sharply as motivation fades. Despite high enthusiasm, only about 40% of "New Year's resolvers" are actually on track after six months.

What causes motivation to fade? And what can you do to keep your enthusiasm high? The answer lies in well-defined goals and personal readiness.

### Ready... set... goals you can live with.

It's easy to get caught up in the excitement of making promises, and end up setting overly optimistic goals that are insurmountable. One example of such a goal would be: "I resolve to lose 30 pounds by April!"

So, how can you ensure that you've set reasonable goals that you can stick to? The key is to break large goals into smaller ones and reframe goals to make them achievable in the short term. Here are a few tips for warming up to those changes:

- Tie short-term goals to a behavior, not a weight loss or fitness outcome. A sample of such a goal is, "I will work out at least three times a week."
- Target the "right" behavior. You can't work out if you never make it there. If "getting there" is your particular challenge, revise your goal to: "I will make it to the fitness center" or "If I can't make it to the fitness center, I will take a brisk walk around the neighborhood."

continued on page 4



## WARMING UP TO YOUR NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

continued from page 3

- Plan incremental milestones. For fitness goals, consider duration, intensity, and frequency. This way you can keep motivation high over time. For example, when focusing on duration, plan to work out 5%-10% longer each week (work up to a 60-minute workout) until the desired level is reached.
- Aim for daily and weekly successes. Reward yourself for each day you make it.

### Are you ready?

Warming up to a goal can be better than arbitrarily choosing January 1st as a starting point for drastic change. Change often happens gradually, and people usually pass through four stages of "change readiness" on their way to making lasting change:

#### "Thinking about it."

You accept that the change (exercising, stopping tobacco use, etc.) is generally good, but you are still vague on how it applies to you. To help yourself move forward, gather information on the benefits of the change you're considering.

#### "Ready for change."

You want to make a change and may be ready to take small steps to test your ability to fully commit. This is a good time to make a commitment. Remember to reach out to friends and family for their support.

#### "Ready for action."

Your plan is in motion and you are taking action. Monitor your progress and celebrate your successes.

#### "I made it."

Reward yourself for maintaining the changes. Forgive yourself for setbacks. If you have to start at step #3 again, consider lessons learned, and forge ahead.

Knowing your personal level of change readiness will help you set goals that are "right" at your stage of readiness. If you are in stage #1, a realistic goal should be to gather information to help you make a decision about the change.

As with any change in physical activity, consult a physician before you begin.

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services:  
Federal Occupational Health/Veteran's Administration  
Employee Health and Wellness Program. *Warming Up to Your New Year's Resolutions: Tips for successfully getting the ball rolling early.* Retrieved July 7, 2014  
from <https://vawin.foh.hhs.gov/news/resolutions.html>





## TIPS FOR FAMILIES WHO WANT TO VOLUNTEER

**Thinking of volunteering this holiday season? Why not do it as a family? These tips can help you get the most out of this experience:**

1. Sometimes busy schedules can allow for little family time. Volunteering is a great opportunity to devote time to spend together. You can bond with your loved ones while also giving back to the community!
2. Life lessons can be taught through service. By volunteering as a family, you have a chance to expand the perspectives of your children and expose them firsthand to new issues. Talking them through their activities can help them reflect on their experience and grow in their understanding.
3. Encourage lifelong volunteering. When families volunteer, children are more likely to develop the habit of giving to their communities, and are more likely to volunteer on their own in the future.
4. Start your own family tradition. It may be ringing bells to raise money during the winter or assisting with a Martin Luther King, Jr. Day of Service project every January. You can start a tradition of service that will create lifelong memories.
5. Invite the whole family. Use your volunteer activities as an opportunity to spend time with family members you don't see every day. Strengthen your entire family by including grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins in your volunteering activities. You could even plan your own event; talk with your local park district and arrange your own project.
6. Choose an activity together. Discussing possible volunteer opportunities can be a great way to help kids think about what matters to them and can help you learn about each other as a family in new ways. Making the decision together is also a great way to ensure that everyone is excited about the activity.
7. Consider letting kids bring their friends. This may make the service experience more fun for them and could also inspire more families to get involved in volunteering.
8. Volunteer as part of a family vacation. Serving together can be a great way to have lots of fun, explore a new place together, and make a difference at the same time.
9. Look for opportunities that can accommodate the skills, interests, and maturity of all family members, especially the younger children.

U.S. Corporation for National and Community Service. (n.d.). *Tips for volunteering: Tips for families who want to volunteer*. Retrieved March 26, 2013 from <http://www.nationalservice.gov>