

Tips for Exercising Indoors

Motivating yourself to exercise during the fall and winter months can be difficult as the days get shorter and the weather gets cooler.

Don't let yourself use the "let's wait until it gets warmer" excuse when it comes to exercise. Inactivity during the fall and winter leads to weight gain, loss of muscle tone, increased susceptibility to seasonal depression, loss of cardiovascular ability and decreased bone density. It also means you have to work extra hard in the spring just to get back into shape again.

When the weather is cooler, physical activity can make the day brighter. Before it's too late, why not make a plan to exercise indoors? Commit yourself to it, and make it as convenient as possible.

Below are some ideas for indoor exercise. They can add enjoyment and variety to your routine and help you reach your fitness goals.

- Find a gym you feel comfortable joining – pick one that you drive by on your way home from work or school
- Find a televised exercise program and follow along at home or invest in an exercise DVD or video
- If you have children, play movement games like freeze tag or follow the leader with your kids; kids always make exercise more fun
- Indoor rock-climbing gyms are a great way to stay in shape while building strength and confidence
- Join an exercise class like aerobics, yoga, fencing or ice-skating at the local recreation center, school or YMCA
- Music is one of the best tools for movement when the weather is uncooperative – play lively, energetic music and dance the day away
- Participate in an indoor team sport or league, such as basketball, hockey, indoor soccer or volleyball
- Purchase some inexpensive or used exercise equipment and use it while watching your favorite movie on a rainy day
- Racket sports like squash, handball, racquetball, badminton and table tennis are great indoor sports that improve health and coordination
- Video games incorporating movement and exercise have shown promise in improving the fitness of gamers
- While watching TV, lift weights or cans, do stomach crunches or walk or jog in place

Keeping active and fit year-round may not be easy but it is possible if you set your mind to it; as with all things, a positive attitude can make all the difference. The benefits of exercising during colder months are both physical and psychological. You could hibernate on your sofa until next spring, but your health and wellness are much better served if you remain active.