

Exercise and the winter months

HEALTH TIPS FROM THE POSSE
BY MARK RACKAY

Staying in an exercise routine is difficult enough without any involvement from old man winter or his partner in crime, Mother Nature. The days are shorter, nights are longer, and the incentive to go outside for a morning run is just non-existent.

The warm months are much easier for me to keep up my work out regime. I run outside in the mornings, long before the sun or the neighbors wake up. If am stuck with inside workouts, I will talk myself out of it. I would much rather pound pavement outside than feel like a hamster running on a wheel with a treadmill. Even worse, my general inclination to do anything, except eat, goes away with it.

Spring, summer and fall are very easy months for outdoor folks to stay active and get outdoors. For me, I have plenty of chores around the house, entertaining the dogs, ATVs, hikes, camping, fishing and some hunting to keep me going burning calories.

Before you ask, yes, I have tried snowshoes, and I am still recovering from the injuries. Snowmobiling? The last time I did that, I had to sit in front of the fire and wait for my eyeballs to thaw. In the past, I have even tried ice fishing, but that didn't work out. Whenever I get the idea to go ice fishing, I strip down to my long johns, lay down in the snow and make snow angels for 30 minutes. After that, if I still feel like going ice fishing, I check into an asylum.

The biggest thing to remember in the winter months is to watch what you eat. Since you may be burning fewer calories because of less activity, food can be a problem. Staying in shape is only 25 percent exercise. The other 75 percent is your diet.

If you can convince yourself to become active in the outdoors, the good news is that exercise in the cold burns more fat and calories than during the warmer times. Deposits of "brown fat" are activated as the body learns to get warmer, faster.

You are going to have to get outside and do some cardio exercise to go along with the diet. Be it powerwalking or a good jog,

it comes with a new set of rules. Running and walking outside during the winter months brings about a whole new set of concerns and dangers. From slipping on the ice to chilling yourself, here are a few ideas to keep safe during your workout routine in the cold months.

Winter has fewer daylight hours, slippery roads and perhaps snow falling. For safety, try to be out during the daylight hours. Wearing a reflective safety vest or carrying a small flashlight will make you more visible to oncoming traffic.

Generally, dress in layers before heading out. I try to suit up as if it is 20 degrees warmer than the actual temperature. When running, this makes it just about right, fast walking, think 15 degrees. When the temperature drops to the teens, my lungs ache too much to run outside, so I have to pick my days.

Your base layers should be wool or a synthetic material. Polyester or polypropylene work well. You want a material that will wick moisture away from your skin to prevent you from getting chilled. Wool is one of the materials that maintains its insulation properties, even when wet. Some of the new synthetic wools provide all the insulation properties without the itching that can come with wool.

The next layer should insulate but allow moisture to escape. I find that fleece works well here. If it is cold enough for a third layer, I look for a lightweight and waterproof jacket that I can unzip to allow air in, but usually it is too cold or windy for a run if you need that third layer.

Your shoes should have an aggressive tread for gripping snow and icy surfaces. Try to avoid shoes that have mesh on the sides that would allow water in. It is best to opt for a waterproof shoe made of Gore-Tex or a similar product. Salomon and Hoka both make excellent trail running shoes and I have used both with success.

If the roads or trail were too slippery, it would be best to hit the treadmill. The last thing you need is a broken ankle, or worse, from a fall. You can buy a set of Yak Trax for your shoes, which act like snow chains, but they can be difficult to run in. Fortunately for us here in Montrose, there



are not too many days that it is that icy out, and when it is, it is safer to wait a day or two. Besides, they don't make studded trail shoes.

Just because its cold out, doesn't mean you don't have to hydrate. You lose as much fluid in winter as you do in summer. Drink water before, during and after your exercise outside. I hate carrying a water bottle around, so I drink 12 ounces before I leave, then hit it again when I get home. Besides, with my luck, the water bottle would freeze up.

The bottom line is watch how much you eat as you aren't burning the calories you were during those active summer months and get outside and do something.

Whether you power walk, jog or run, continuing your exercise routine in the winter months is important. Braving the elements will help you build the necessary foundation for total physical conditioning. It also gets you outdoors in the fresh air, and to me it is better than a treadmill.

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Project aims to improve multilingual emergency alerting in Colorado

Researchers at the Natural Hazards Center at the University of Colorado Boulder have launched a new project to understand how Colorado can make emergency alerts more inclusive — reaching people who speak languages other than English and people with auditory and visual disabilities.

In Colorado, many residents never receive warnings in the event of a wildfire, flood or similar disaster. Those who do often only receive alerts in English.

"We know from the Grizzly Creek Fire in 2020 and the Marshall Fire a year later that when alerts don't go out in multiple languages, it can cause real harm," said Mary Angelica Painter, a research associate at the Natural Hazards Center. "When people do not receive alerts, they often seek information elsewhere, which might delay responses or provide inaccurate information."

Painter and her team will host a series of focus groups to hear how residents

who speak non-English languages receive, perceive and process emergency information.

In 2023, the Colorado legislature passed House Bill 23-1237, which tasked the Natural Hazards Center with conducting a survey of the state's emergency alert systems.

For this first phase of the project, the Natural Hazards Center surveyed 222 emergency response personnel from 57 of Colorado's 64 counties.

In a 2024 report, the researchers discovered a patchwork landscape, in which officials use a wide range of channels and resources to warn Coloradans about emergencies. Because of this, alerting varies from county to county, and even town to town.

In many cases, residents must sign up to receive emergency alerts through a third-party system, which often involves downloading an app. Across Colorado, alerting authorities reported sign-up rates below 40%.

In the new project, which is funded by the U.S. National Oceanic

and Atmospheric Administration, MacPherson-Krutzky and Painter have set out to address some of those gaps.

The research team partnered with the Spring Institute, the Colorado Language Access Coalition (CLAC) and the City of Boulder to work directly with communities on the ground in Colorado. The researchers and their partners are hosting 13 virtual and in-person focus groups across the state. The team already led one focus group this month in English for community organizations. Six of the remaining 12 focus groups will be in Spanish, three in Chinese and three in Vietnamese.

"What we're hearing from emergency personnel is that we need more information about what's happening on the ground," said Carson MacPherson-Krutzky, a research associate at the Natural Hazards Center. "Are these communities actually receiving alerts? If they're translated, is the way that they're translated understandable?"

Information from University of Colorado-Boulder media relations.

Cost for substance use and recovery services no longer a barrier through the recovery access fund

Tri-County Health Network (TCHNetwork) offers the Recover Access Fund (RAF) to individuals for recovery therapy sessions across Delta, Montrose, Ouray, San Miguel, and the West End of Montrose counties. RAF connects people to vital substance use recovery services and helps individuals get the care they need, when they need it, without cost being an obstacle.

Through RAF, residents in these communities can receive financial support on up to 12 therapy sessions per year. These sessions are removing the cost barriers in seeking substance use therapy and sobriety.

To better support local providers and expand care options, TCHNetwork has increased their RAF reimbursement rate to \$125 per session. This increase helps ensure providers can offer these services and receive fair compensation per session. Currently, there are 120 providers that accept RAF, and we are actively accepting new providers.

"By investing directly in providers, we're investing in healthier individuals, stronger families, and a more resilient community," says Melanie Wasserman, Co-Executive Director at TCHNetwork.

To learn more about the Recovery Access Fund or how to participate, visit www.tchnetwork.org/raf or contact Tri-County Health Network today at 970.708.7096.



A view of a burned retail business complex along McCaslin Blvd just south of Dillon Road in Louisville. A grass fire fueled by 100 mph winds destroyed over 1000 buildings in Superior and Louisville and displace nearly 600 CU Boulder students and 700 staff and faculty. (Photo by Glenn Asakawa/University of Colorado)