

Tips for exercising in hot and cold temperatures

August 2024

When is it too hot to exercise?

Always check the heat index, as well as the temperature and humidity, before exercising outdoors.

- Temperature + humidity > 150 = dangerous for outdoor exercise
- Heat index > 90 = dangerous for outdoor exercise

Exercise raises your core body temperature and hot, humid weather decreases your ability to regulate body temperature through:

- Increased heart rate
- Decreased blood pressure
- Increased dehydration

Know the symptoms of heat stress/stroke

- Confusion
- Fainting
- Headache
- Vomiting
- Muscle/abdominal cramps
- Dark colored urine (sign of dehydration)
- Dizziness
- Fatigue
- Nausea
- Diarrhea

Dehydration

Dehydration may be the first symptom of heat stress.

- As a general rule, drink 64 ounces (2 liters) of water daily.
- Eat hydrating foods. These include watermelon, cucumbers, melons, celery and peaches.

Sun safety

- Use sunscreen – at least SPF 15 – that protects against both UVA and UVB sun rays.
- Wear 99-100% UVA/UVB sunglasses or dark-colored lenses for eye protection.
- Limit time spent in the sun, especially between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

When is it too cold to exercise outdoors?

Check the wind chill and air temperature. The wind penetrates your clothes and removes the insulating layer of warm air. Your movement also creates wind chill.

- Temperature < 40 degrees = exercise no more than 15 minutes outside
- Temperature < 0 degrees = dangerous for outdoor exercise. Stay inside.
- If the wind chill is < -20 degrees = stay inside

Warning signs and symptoms of cold exposure

- Shivering: body trying to generate heat
- Frostbite: superficial tissue numbness that does not warm up with exercise
- Hard, pale, cold skin: monitor your fingers and toes
- Hypothermia: significant drop in core body temperature < 95.0 F
- Shivering, confusion increases, hallucinations, heart stops

Exercise safety tips in cold weather

- Stay hydrated. When you see your breath, that is moisture leaving your body.
- Layer clothing to protect exposed skin. Use a wicking inner layer to keep skin dry, an insulating middle layer to keep warmth, and a wind/water-proof outer layer to protect from outside elements.
- Wear a hat, gloves and socks, since 40% of your body heat is lost through your head, and up to 30% escapes through your hands and feet. Avoid cotton socks!
- Warm up with a light activity – such as walking – prior to stretching to get your blood flowing and loosen your muscles to prevent injury.

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