

Winter Walking Tips

As the old saying goes, “There is no such thing as bad weather, only inappropriate clothing.”

- **Dress in layers.** Multiple light layers can help keep your body insulated while allowing heat to circulate throughout your body without overheating. Your first layer should be moisture-wicking and a light fleece layer should keep you warm.
- **Cover your hands and ears.** Avoid **frostbite** by covering those vulnerable areas on your body.
- **Look at your shoes.** Make sure your shoe has more traction than found in a typical gym shoe. If it needs more traction, look into snow or ice cleats that you can add to the bottom of any shoe. Don't forget to avoid mesh fabric!
- **Grab a scarf.** If you have asthma the cold air could agitate your lungs. Wrap the scarf over your nose and mouth to prevent the **icy sting** in the air.
- **Wear bright colors.** Winters are known for dark mornings and dark afternoons. Wear bright clothing and reflective gear to ensure others see you walking.
- **Pick a safe route.** Areas of sidewalk that aren't shoveled can cause barriers to your route. Look for other walking for a safe route.
- **Warm-up.** Do a few jumping jacks or high knees to warm your body up before you go outside.
- **Recover afterward.** This will help protect your muscles from cramping, soreness, and dehydration.



Image: Freepik.com



Adapted from the winter walking tips page of the Northshore University Health System web page.

<https://www.northshore.org/healthy-you/8-tips-for-walking-in-winter/>

See tips for winter bicycling on the next page



Winter Bicycling Tips



Being visible is your first concern. Wear bright-colored clothing during the day and be sure to wear reflective clothing as it gets dark use reflective strips on clothing, leg bands, vests, etc. Lastly, there is no substitute for the best lights you can afford!

Choose your route carefully. Heat from traffic helps clear streets of snow and ice. The best places to ride is where cars have driven, not near the side of the street which stay snow and ice covered. Find streets with enough traffic to clear the snow and ice, but not so busy that you feel uncomfortable riding in the car-cleared path.

Preventive maintenance is key.

- Make sure your **brakes and gears** are in good condition, especially cables and cable housing. Grease all cables so they move smoothly and protect them from the wet and salt. Replace cracked cable housing to prevent water from getting inside.
- **Tires** should have plenty of tread, and the sidewalls should not be cracked. Use less air in your tires when the roads are snowy or icy for better traction. Studded bicycle tires are also available.
- Make sure **fenders, racks, lights** and other attachments are secure.

Winter bike setup is a personal choice. Winter bicyclists generally recommend something along the lines of a hybrid or mountain bike with upright handlebars, thumb or grip-twist shifters, knobby tires (studded tires are popular, too) and low gearing. Accessories include a rack for carrying things, fenders to help keep you and the bike clean, and good lights and reflectors.

Adapting to winter road conditions for bicycling is similar to changes needed for driving a car. On snow-covered or icy roads, ride slower, be aware of hazards and know how to react to them.

- **Use easier gears to pedal through snow and across ice.** Plodding along in high gears will cause you to skid out. If the front wheel is skidding around, put more of your body weight forward to keep the front wheel going straight. Bar end extensions can help you get your weight further forward.
- **Remember it will take you longer to stop.** Use your brakes lightly. Panic stops don't work on snow or ice. Practice braking away from traffic, on a slight hill if possible, to get used to how much pressure you can use before locking up and skidding on snow and ice.

Two of the biggest concerns for bicyclists in the winter are changing road conditions and changing light conditions through the day.

- **Bright sun in the morning melts snow and creates glare in the eyes of motorists.** Glare, combined with dirty windshields, makes it difficult for motorists to see each other, let alone bicycles. Thus the importance of brightly colored outerwear and riding defensively.
- **The melted snow means your rims are wet and braking ability is reduced.** It also turns to a thin layer of ice at night, when you can't see well. Another reason for a good headlight.

Adapted from the City of Madison's Get Biking web page.

<https://www.cityofmadison.com/bikeMadison/getBiking/winter.cfm>