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In this Review:

Staying Active in Cold Weather: A Safety Guide for Older Adults

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We consulted professionals to provide older adults with a comprehensive guide to safe physical activity in cold weather.

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Key Takeaways

- Regular physical activity offers physical, mental, emotional, and social benefits.
- Older adults are at risk for vitamin D deficiency and subsequent health conditions, like frailty. Safe participation in outdoor activities can increase sun exposure and boost the body's vitamin D production, even in cold weather.
- Don't let bad weather stop you from moving. Many resources are available to help you find different ways to exercise indoors, whether at a gym or at home.

Exercise doesn't have to feel like a chore. It can be fun, safe, and empowering with the right guidance. Our Reviews Team consulted the following professionals to develop the most comprehensive guide for physical activity in cold weather:

- [Chris Kacyon](#), department head of the Health and Fitness Science Department at Wake Technical Community College in Raleigh, North Carolina, and former physiologist at Duke Lifestyle and Weight Management Center in Durham, North Carolina
- [Darlan Ohling](#), doctor of physical therapy in Miami, Florida

Age should never be a reason to stop challenging your mind and body. Exercise promotes physical, cognitive, emotional, and social benefits. [1]

- **Supports physical function:** Improvements in fitness, balance, and fall-risk awareness improve our ability to engage in everyday activities, like self-care or home chores. [2]
- **Relieves and prevents pain:** Evidence shows regular activity can reduce the risk of neck and back pain. It can also help reduce pain intensity and mental health disorders that can occur with chronic pain, like depression. [3] [4]
- **Improves self-confidence:** Regular exercise supports perceived safety while doing everyday activities, boosting confidence. [2]
- **Builds community:** Group exercise is linked to feelings of connectedness by completing programs as a team and keeping each other accountable. [2]
- **Improves sleep hygiene:** Physical activity during the day, especially in the sunlight, can help regulate your [circadian rhythm and sleep routine](#).
- **Protects brain health:** Thirty minutes of moderate-intensity exercise five days per week can help prevent degenerative brain diseases like Alzheimer's. [5]
- **Promotes emotional well-being:** Exercise can be as effective as antidepressants in reducing depression in older adults. [6] People also report improved mood, motivation, and feelings of purpose associated with group exercise participation. [2]
- **Supports bone health:** Physical activity has a positive effect on bone health, improving hip and lower back bone density while preventing or slowing the development of [osteoporosis](#) in older adults. [7]
- **Prevents cardiovascular conditions:** Older adults who exercise regularly have better cardiovascular health, decreasing heart workload and regulating blood pressure. [8]
- **[Decreases falls risk](#):** Combining aerobic exercise and strength training is shown to reduce the risk of falls. Exercise programs incorporating three hours of balance training per week can reduce falls risk by 21%. [8] [9]
- **Prevents onset of disease:** Engaging in physical activity helps prevent chronic conditions like diabetes, certain types of cancer, and stroke. [10]

Not every exercise has the same purpose. Depending on your goals, exercise can be categorized into four main groups, each focusing on a different fitness aspect: endurance, strength, flexibility and mobility, and balance.

While they're all important, some people may focus on one category more than another, depending on their current status and wellness goals.

Endurance exercise

Also known as aerobic exercise, endurance activities are prolonged, repetitive exercises that get your heart beating faster. Although your heart rate, blood pressure, and breathing rate increase temporarily during exercise, long-term effects lower these factors for a healthier cardiovascular system. [11]

Examples of endurance activities include:

- Walking or hiking in a park
- Biking or jogging
- Swimming laps in a pool

Strength exercise

Strength or resistance training builds muscle and supports joint health. [Research](#) has suggested strength training alone can improve joint mobility in adults by up to 28%. [12] This type of training involves working against resistance, like body weight or dumbbells, to improve your muscles' capacity to work through heavy tasks. You can use your own body's weight for resistance exercises. Push-ups, planks, lunges, and pull-ups are all strengthening exercises that can be done at home with little to no equipment.

When you add speed to strength training, it's called power training. This involves moving against resistance quickly, creating explosive movements. Jumping is a classic example because your muscles are working quickly to move the weight of your body against the resistance of gravity.

- Lifting heavy boxes onto a shelf
- Squatting with a challenging weight
- Carrying loaded grocery bags from the car

Flexibility and joint mobility training

Flexibility refers to a muscle's ability to lengthen, while joint mobility refers to the joint's ability to move freely. Both types of training go hand in hand because they allow you to move with less restriction.

Lack of flexibility and joint mobility contributes to feelings of stiffness and can limit your ability to participate in everyday activities. For example, if your knee joint is limited in bending, getting on and off the floor for exercises might be tough or painful.

Examples of flexibility and joint mobility activities include:

- Participating in yoga
- Doing a stretching routine in the morning or before bedtime
- Warming up before a workout by moving your joints comfortably

Balance training

Often overlooked, balance training is an essential part of independent movement and confidence. Your brain takes information from your body's position and its surroundings to make adjustments that keep you steady. Without adequate balance, movements feel uncoordinated, leaving you vulnerable to injury.

Activities that incorporate balance and coordination include:

- Participating in [Tai Chi](#)

walking on uneven ground, like sand or gravel.

How much exercise do I really need?

The American College of Sports Medicine (ACSM) and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) **recommend** healthy adults engage in the following amount of exercise per week: [13] [14] [15]

- About 150 minutes of moderate-intensity endurance exercise, **or** 60–75 minutes of vigorous-intensity endurance exercise
- Two activity sessions dedicated to strengthening exercises that target the whole body

What you consider moderate- or vigorous-intensity exercise might differ from someone else. Rating how difficult an exercise feels is the best way to rank its intensity. According to a 0–10 scale called the **Rating of Perceived Exertion (RPE)**, an exercise that rates between 3–4 is considered moderate intensity, and an exercise between 4–6 is considered vigorous intensity. [16]

Between exercise days, be sure to incorporate rest days of light activity (a 3 out of 10 or lower on the RPE scale) to allow your body to recover. [14]

According to ACSM, older adults should regularly engage in balance, flexibility, and mobility training to prevent falls and to keep moving through older adulthood. [14] You can combine these activities with endurance or strength exercises.

Those with chronic conditions and difficulty meeting physical activity guidelines should adhere to recommendations as closely as possible and can make exercise shorter or less intense, if necessary. [15]

If you're unsure of how you should incorporate an exercise routine, talk to a coach or trainer who can provide personalized recommendations. Those with chronic conditions or **fear of falling** should talk to their doctor and ask for a referral to a rehabilitation specialist, like a **physical therapist**.

Starting any new habit takes time, and getting into an exercise routine is no different. We asked Kacyon to share advice on ways to combat common reasons older adults veer off-track.

Problem one: “I find it hard to stay accountable”

Kacyon recommends working with someone else who can help you stay on the right path, whether a trainer, family member, or friend. Together, you can work toward similar goals and build each other up when you feel unmotivated or lack confidence.

And if you're having trouble completing your routine, Kacyon advised breaking the workout into smaller parts that last no longer than 10 minutes. “It's easier to convince yourself to do 10 minutes compared to 30 minutes, and something is better than nothing,” he said.

Problem two: “My mobility is limited and sometimes painful”

“If you experience [pain during movement](#), it is recommended to work with a trained professional, so you don't increase your pain,” said Kacyon. A doctor's referral to a rehabilitation specialist, like an occupational or physical therapist, might be appropriate. They'll evaluate your movement, provide insight into why you may be feeling pain or limitation, and recommend safe exercises that can help improve your symptoms and get you back on track.

In the meantime, talk to your doctor or rehabilitation specialist to see if some [adaptive exercises](#) are appropriate while you heal.

Problem three: “I don't have enough space or equipment”

People can still exercise in a small space, said Kacyon. And you don't need special equipment for a good workout. He recommended using everyday household items. A few simple home exercises include:

- Wall push-ups

sit to stand from a dining room chair

- Bicep curls with full water bottles or jugs
- Plank holds from your counter or couch

If you'd like more variety and you're able to commute, consider joining a community center, a local gym, or a [senior center](#). Most senior centers offer exercise classes tailored to a wide range of interests and activity levels. The [YMCA](#) and [YWCA](#) are also good examples of gyms with diverse classes and activities for the entire community. They can be found throughout the U.S. Check out where they're located near you by following the links above.

If your outdoor home environment is safe and you feel ready to venture outside, use greenway paths, sidewalk curbs, and park benches to complete your exercise routine. Not confident going outside, especially in cold weather? Don't go alone. Find a friend or family member to accompany you, or bring a [mobile medical alert system](#) so you can call for help from wherever you are.

Safe activity in colder weather

While indoor activities are a great way to keep moving, outdoor activities and sun exposure should still be incorporated into your activity routine when possible. Sun exposure can boost vitamin D, an important nutrient that supports bone, nerve, and immune system health. [17] Unfortunately, many older adults have vitamin D deficiency, and a [wide body of research](#) has found that lack of sufficient vitamin D increases the risk of fractures, heart conditions, diabetes, and cancer. [18]

Outdoor activities

Cold weather shouldn't stop you from enjoying the outdoors. Here are some fun ways to get moving during the chilly winter months:

- **Take a walk:** Keep it simple by strolling around your yard, neighborhood, or local park. If you don't feel comfortable or motivated walking alone, find a walking buddy or exercise group to go with you. Don't worry about the distance or duration—focus on a

can lower the risk of stroke, reduce stress levels, and improve sleep quality. [19]

- **Take up cross-country skiing and snowshoeing:** Many ski centers have significant discounts for older adults and veterans. Some ski resorts offer daily and seasonal discounts on solo and group activities for adults 65 and older. And if you're new to the sport, ask about lessons. Why not try something new?
- **Tend to the garden or yard:** Gardening is a year-round physical activity. Many root vegetables, leafy greens, and flowering plants grow during winter months. They might require watering, sowing, soil changes, or fertilizing—all activities that require squatting, digging, carrying, and pulling. And yard work, like raking leaves or shoveling snow, is considered a moderate-to-vigorous activity that gets your heart pumping. [20]
- **Take up a do-it-yourself project:** Tap into your crafty side by repainting your front door or reorganizing your garage. Outdoor projects can be a fun way to get yourself moving, and they're a great way to channel creativity, which can boost your mood. [21]

Outdoor exercise safety

Before heading outside, be aware of winter weather risks. When exposed to the cold, your body must adapt to prevent heat loss. Some adaptations slow with age or have negative consequences for those who have chronic conditions, leaving some older adults vulnerable to cold weather injuries. Falling on icy surfaces is also a concern, but with the right preparation, you can stay safe outdoors during the winter months.

- **Bundle up:** If you plan to head outside, dress in layers and protect your body from the elements. It's better to wear too much than not enough. You can always shed layers if necessary. Opt for waterproof jackets and gloves in the rain and snow and bring an extra change of clothes if you get wet to avoid [hypothermia](#) ⓘ.
- **Prioritize a warm-up:** Getting ready to do some heavier outdoor activities? You may need to [warm up](#) your body with stretches or mild exercises first. "Your body is less mobile in colder conditions, which poses a greater risk to your muscles and joints," said Kacyon. You can avoid injury by easing into movement, and once your body generates some heat, you'll feel loose enough to take it up a notch.

snow can melt and refreeze, creating ice on sidewalks and roads and posing a significant fall risk. Listen closely to your local weather channel to determine if it's safe to venture outdoors. If you need to shovel your driveway after a snowfall, do so while the snow is fresh, or find someone who can help.

- **Opt for shoes with good traction:** Wearing a shoe with adequate traction will help you grip the ground, especially while navigating hills, wet surfaces, or loose earth (like pine straw or mud). Choose shoes with rubber soles and deep grooves. If you need more traction for snowy conditions, snow boots are the best option because they're warm and typically waterproof. Unfortunately, they're also costly. Traction cleats that strap onto your existing footwear can be a budget-friendly solution, but you may be sacrificing protection from water and cold. This can be dangerous for those with diabetes due to the limited foot sensation it can cause. Without adequate protection from the cold, you risk tissue damage from frostbite. [22]
- **Keep your phone nearby:** Take your phone wherever you go outdoors, even if you're just in the backyard, so you can call family, friends, or emergency assistance in case of emergency. Many phones also have a global positioning system (GPS), a digital map to help navigate your environment, get home safely, or tell others where you are.
- **Use the buddy system:** If you're headed to a less populated area, like a hike into a forest, don't go alone. Find a friend or family member to accompany you, or join a local hiking club. Contact your local community center or look on social media platforms, like [Facebook](#), to find open groups. Some senior centers also host outdoor hikes.
- **Consider a medical alert system:** Regardless of age or physical ability, quick access to help provides peace of mind, and a phone doesn't always cut it. [Medical alert systems](#) are an excellent backup because they contact emergency services for you when you press the help button. Some can detect falls, too, and will send a call for help even if you're unable to speak or have lost consciousness. Some of the best medical alert systems are mobile, which means they use cellular towers to contact help wherever you go. Our [Reviews Team](#) recommends the [Mini Guardian from Medical Guardian](#) for reliable on-the-go fall detection because it has GPS location tracking, so help can find you wherever you are.

Indoor exercise

Don't let freezing weather stop you in your tracks. Indoor exercises can be just as effective as outdoor activities. Get moving with a variety of options.

- **Join a Tai Chi session:** [Multiple studies](#) have reported that Tai Chi effectively prevents falls in older adults by incorporating balance, coordination, strength, and endurance. [23] Many gyms and senior centers offer Tai Chi as a group class, and you can find videos online to guide you through the movements at home. (Be aware that not all online Tai Chi programs online are evidence based). If you're a beginner to the activity, we encourage you to attend an in-person, evidence-based program first, so you know what to expect and can ask questions before signing up.
- **Take a yoga class:** Many recreation and senior centers offer group yoga classes to improve mobility, balance, strength, and mental health. [24] Ask what equipment you need to bring, like a yoga mat or yoga blocks, to help support your practice. You can

for free lessons on YouTube, but not all lessons are beginner-friendly. Start your search by browsing the [SilverSneakers](#) yoga videos, which offer a variety of lessons that cater to all levels.

- **Work out at a gym:** Gyms offer a variety of equipment to get you moving. You can lift weights, ride a stationary bike, or use the machines to break a sweat. You may need to purchase a gym pass to attend regularly, and if you want extra guidance from a personal trainer, you'll likely need to pay for sessions. Local recreation centers are a great place to start your search, and many [senior centers](#) have gyms available for members, so be sure to include these in your search.
- **Work out at home with videos:** You don't always need a gym to get a workout. Use everyday items in your house as "equipment" to challenge yourself, like heavy books or a set of stairs. [YouTube](#) is a great resource for home workouts, but look for lessons with clear instructions and professional guidance. We highly recommend starting with low-impact exercise routines with seated and standing options, like the workouts from [Improved Health](#), which are led by a recreational therapist. Also, consider the [HASfit channel](#), led by a fitness trainer who offers exercise routines with modifications for all levels.
- **Join an indoor sport:** Many communities have sports leagues where you can practice and compete indoors with a team. [Pickleball](#) and bowling are two popular options. Also, look into walking sports that adjust existing game rules to walking intensities. Walking soccer is one example. Regulated by the [U.S. Adult Soccer League](#), walking soccer is often played indoors during the winter. [Research](#) has found combat classes like boxing, karate, and taekwondo are excellent options for older adults, improving muscle strength, balance, agility, memory, mental health, and mood. [25] Some combat sports, like kickboxing, have been [shown](#) to improve bone health and combat chronic issues like [osteoporosis](#), or loss of bone density. [26]

Indoor exercise safety

While the following precautions aren't exclusive to indoor activities, they are important reminders about exercise safety. Keep these in mind when you're exercising at the gym, in your home, or on the indoor field.

how the equipment works, so you're not injured using them the wrong way. Try not to feel embarrassed. Remember that they have been trained to help you. If you're looking for more guidance on exercises, ask about personal training sessions, or join group workouts to gain confidence around equipment.

- **Declutter your workout space:** Home workouts are challenging enough without dodging the coffee table. When you choose a workout space, ensure you have ample room to complete your workout. Tripping over clutter shouldn't be part of your workout.
- **Wear the right shoes:** If you're lifting weights, using machines, or attending a class with others, protect your feet by wearing closed-toe shoes. If you're playing an indoor sport, ensure you have the right shoes to complement your sport's playing surface. For example, bowlers must use bowling shoes designed to let them slide on the hardwood floors. Not only might other shoes damage the floors, but you may also risk injury by catching your feet on the surface's material.
- **Be smart with surfaces:** Unless you're participating in an activity that calls for sliding (like bowling), opt for grippy surfaces that don't pose a risk for falls. Wearing socks on tile or hardwood floors can be a dangerously slippery combination.
- **Know your limits:** You can find many home workouts online, but they're not all designed by credible sources for beginners. If you're new to exercise, we highly recommend starting in-person in a solo or group setting with an instructor you can ask questions and receive guidance from. Once you know which intensities and movements feel safe, you'll also know when to push your limits and when to give yourself grace.
- **Stay in communication:** Keeping a phone nearby or wearing a medical alert system is important if exercising alone at home. But it's also a good idea to keep them close while in public spaces, like the gym, even if there are staff nearby. Someone may not see you right away if you fall, faint, or feel unwell. If you have fall detection, your medical alert system may contact help before anyone else can.

Adaptive cold-weather exercise considerations

Where there's a will, there's a way. We collaborated with Ohling to share recommendations on how older adults can adapt their exercise routine to common medical conditions and maintain their activity levels during cold weather. Use your best judgment when starting a new activity, and always refer to a doctor if you're unsure what's safe for your condition.

Limited upper body mobility and strength

Many conditions can affect dexterity, and some are common as we age. Familiarizing yourself with common, age-related conditions can help you to prepare for them, instead of being alarmed when (or if) the symptoms begin. Arthritis is a common diagnosis that can affect the use of our hands, like opening a jar or clasping a necklace. Unfortunately, cold weather can aggravate arthritis symptoms, exacerbating stiff and painful joints. [27] It's important to stay warm and keep moving during winter months to keep symptoms at bay. When you head outdoors, opt for warm, waterproof gloves that protect your wrists, hands,

Ask your doctor for a referral to a rehabilitation professional, who can teach strategies to overcome dexterity issues and safely practice upper body exercises for your condition. If symptoms limit your ability to hold and carry items, focus on lower body activities instead, like:

- Walking
- Stationary biking
- Bodyweight squats and lunges

Limited lower body mobility and strength

Those with limited lower body mobility and strength may also be at risk for falls. Take the [Falls Free CheckUp](#) to screen your risk for a fall, and if you're at risk, ask your doctor for a referral to a rehabilitation professional who can teach you appropriate activities to practice. They can help you feel more confident on your feet and may recommend using an assistive device, like a cane or walker, to stay safe.

Arthritis can also affect the hips, knees, and ankles, contributing to stiffness and pain with movement. Remember to bundle up appropriately since cold weather can worsen symptoms. [27] And if you're preparing for some cold weather activities, allot extra time to [warm up](#) your joints with preliminary exercises to prepare your body for movement.

If it's not safe for you to perform standing activities unassisted, focus on seated upper body exercises instead, like:

- Seated lifting routines
- Chair yoga
- Upper body machines at the gym

Vision loss

according to the [American Foundation for the Blind](#). [29]

It's possible to learn strategies and exercises that will help keep you independent. Ask your doctor to work with a rehabilitation professional who can teach you safe balance exercises, which reduce fall risk by improving body awareness, control, and coordination. [30] Specific exercise recommendations depend on the extent of your vision loss, although Ohling recommended using the buddy system or a sighted guide when venturing into cold weather. Icy conditions and slick surfaces can be difficult to detect even under the best conditions.

Diabetes

Physical activity can make your body more [sensitive to insulin](#), which helps manage diabetes. [31] But cold weather may cause blood sugar spikes due to hormonal changes that reduce insulin production, allowing blood sugar to stay in the system longer. [32]

Although people with diabetes can safely exercise, check your blood sugar to ensure it's at a good level before starting. If it's below 100 milligrams per deciliter (mg/dL), you'll need to eat a snack with carbohydrates before you start exercising in order to prevent feeling faint during your workout. If it's above 240 mg/dL, it's too high for activity and you should closely monitor your levels for a few hours while drinking water. If they don't drop, you may need to take a dose of insulin, but you should consult with a medical professional immediately. [31] [33]

Ohling added a caution for those with diabetes: Always have a sugary snack or drink nearby in case you feel your blood sugar drop, especially when leaving the house. Symptoms include feeling faint, nauseous, or dizzy. But avoid taking your insulin with you, since freezing temperatures will damage the medication. Cold weather can also damage insulin pumps, so keep them warm and close to your skin. [32]

Some people with diabetes lack foot sensation. Be sure to examine your feet and toes for blisters, sores, and cuts. When it's cold out, take extra care to keep your feet warm and dry to prevent frostbite. If you notice an injury that's not healing after a few days, have it examined by a doctor. [31]

High Blood Pressure

response to cold temperatures, which increases blood pressure.

Ohling told us that those with existing high blood pressure should closely monitor their vitals during the winter months. If you don't already own an automatic blood pressure cuff at home, purchase one [online or at your local pharmacy](#) and [follow the directions closely](#) to receive an accurate reading and log your numbers twice a day. Normal [blood pressures](#) sit just below 120/80 millimeters of mercury (mmHg). [34] If you notice a trend of higher than normal numbers, talk to your doctor and show them your daily logs.

When venturing outdoors, Ohling suggested bundling up appropriately and avoiding overexertion to keep your blood pressure steady. If your blood pressure is in the high range (above 130/80 mmHg), talk to your doctor about safe outdoor activities during the winter months and avoid other factors that may elevate your levels, like smoking and alcohol. [34] You may opt for indoor activities instead. Remember to breathe through movements, as breath-holding during strenuous activities can spike blood pressure. [35]

On the other hand, low blood pressure, or hypotension, is also a risk for some people. Referred to medically as exercise-associated postural hypotension (EAPH), blood pressure drops following a strenuous workout, resulting in less oxygen going to the organs—including the brain—and increasing the risk of falls and loss of consciousness. Other symptoms can include dizziness, confusion, and blurred vision. Some medical conditions and medications can influence the risk factor for EAPH, so talk to your doctor about your risk. [36]

Taking care of your body before and after a workout

Kacyon told us that warmups and cool-downs are an important part of any workout. “A proper warmup and cool-down allows older adults to safely exercise in any condition, including the cold,” he said.

How to warm up

Before your workout or activity, allot some time for a warmup. “The warmup prepares your heart, muscles, and joints for more intense movement,” said Kacyon. About 5–10 minutes of movement prepares the body for your upcoming activity and helps prevent injury. [37] For

The most important aspect of a warmup is to ease into movement—stretching while seated on a chair doesn't have the same effect as a dynamic warmup that gets the blood pumping to the muscles you're about to use. [39] Opt for movements that get the whole body involved, prioritizing the body regions you're about to use the most. For example, if you're preparing for a boxing class, your instructor may lead you through a warmup consisting of low-intensity upper-body movements to get your arm and core muscles ready for action.

How to cool down

After you complete your exercise, you should perform a five-minute cooldown, which settles the body into a more rested state. Your movement intensity should drop significantly, allowing your heart and breathing rates to slow down.

Kacyon suggests a slow walk at the end of your workout, then engaging in gentle stretching. Take your time—hold stretches for 30 seconds and focus on breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.

Always allot time to ramp down your activity and allow your body to recover. If you stop exercising immediately without a cool down, especially after more intense exercise, you risk feeling sick or fainting. [37]

Stay hydrated

Ohling urged older adults to stay hydrated during winter months. Up to 40% of older adults are **under-hydrated**, and cold weather doesn't help. [40] People typically don't feel as thirsty in cold weather as in hot weather, but you still need to **drink water to stay healthy**. [41] The standard recommendation is about eight glasses daily, but consult your doctor to determine how much water is healthy considering your weight, activity level, and health status. [42] There may be medical factors that influence your recommended fluid intake, like your medication regimen.

Technologies to keep you healthy and active

steps, watch your heart rate, and ensure you fit activity into your day.

- **Step tracking:** Several wearable technologies count how many steps you take daily to measure general physical activity. Setting a daily goal of 7,000–10,000 steps will help most older adults meet the moderate-to-vigorous physical activity guidelines from the ACSM and CDC. [43]
- **Route tracking:** Stay safe on trails by using route trackers for your cellphone on the [App Store](#) (Apple phones) or [Google Play](#) (Android phones). Free downloadable applications like [AllTrails](#) provide maps of your routes, with real-time GPS location. Although we don't recommend going to areas without a cellphone signal, especially alone, you can also download maps for [offline use](#). If you use city and neighborhood paths, we recommend downloading the free [MapMyWalk](#) (or [MapMyRide](#) for bicycling) app because it's highly rated on app stores, tracks your route in real time, helps you find new routes, and allows you to save your favorite routes.
- **Workout streaming and apps:** [YouTube](#) is a great resource for free workouts of all levels, but remember to look for beginner workouts from licensed professionals and clinics. When possible, use workouts that include ways to modify the exercises to your ability. If you're looking for a cellphone application so you can stream workouts at the park or gym and if you are a SilverSneakers member, the [SilverSneakers GO](#) application provides access to free guided workouts for different fitness levels and live virtual classes.
- **Brain training and mental wellness apps:** We also like SilverSneakers GO because it offers free guided [meditation](#), which helps you to de-stress and regulate your mood. [Research](#) also showed that meditation can boost brain function, like attention and memory. [44] Although there are many online games and puzzles that claim to improve brain function, we recommend completing off-screen challenges. Learning new skills, like quilting and photography, boosts cognition without excessive blue light exposure from screens. [45] Blue light exposure, especially at night, can negatively impact the restful sleep needed to think clearly during the day. [46]

Beware of nutrition apps

individuals are on medications that can cause their weight to fluctuate. Additionally, certain medical conditions, such as diabetes and heart disease, may require specific dietary restrictions or considerations,” he said. If you’re concerned about your diet, talk to your physician before making any changes.

Bottom line

Don’t let cold weather put a damper on your activity levels. It’s important to stay active all year to keep your body strong and your mind sharp, so be adventurous and explore new ways to move.

Bundle up and head outdoors to soak in nature, but take precautions to stay safe. If the weather doesn’t permit outdoor exercise, get creative with some indoor activities, like a home workout, a boxing lesson at your local gym, or Tai Chi at your local senior center.

Unsure what activities are most appropriate for you? Talk to a personal trainer who can give you some advice. If you have a chronic condition, like pain or limited mobility, ask your doctor how to incorporate exercise into your daily routine. You may benefit from a referral to a physical therapist.

Have questions about this article? Email us at reviewsteam@ncoa.org.

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