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Winter Fitness

Staying active when you'd rather hibernate

BY HOLLY JOHNSON / PHOTOS BY ERIN DRAGO

Christmas wrapped up. The new year rang in. The groundhog declared winter is here for a while. You laughed, but it turned out the rodent was right: A cold wind is blowing for the 10th day in a row. In protest, you retreated to the couch—and you're still there.

Finding motivation to move can be tough this time of year. But exercise has tremendous benefits that make it well worth the effort. It relieves stress, facilitates sleep, increases energy, improves strength and endurance, helps maintain a healthy weight and reduces the risk of developing chronic diseases. That means there's no time like the present to establish your own healthy habits!

Here are five ways to help you beat the elements and get moving:

Take one step

Starting a fitness routine may feel uncomfortable. Your body may not like doing things it hasn't done in a while (or ever). This is perfectly normal! Simply take the first step.

Enlist a friend

Invite a friend to exercise with you. Working together toward a goal can strengthen an existing friendship or grow a new one. It also adds an element of accountability to your routine.

Join an event

Why not train for a spring race or another competition? Do some research and talk with your parents about what might fit the family budget.

Find a cause

Participating in a fundraising event may provide inspiration that helps you commit to an exercise program. Many specialized athletic events include the collection of charitable donations as a registration requirement.

Bundle up

When you dress in layers that are appropriate for the climate where you live, you might find that you get comfortable exercising in temperatures well below the norm. *8*

Holly Johnson writes from Colorado Springs, Colorado. A runner and triathlon dabbler, she is a certified personal trainer, women's fitness specialist, corrective exercise specialist and distance running coach.

The Workout

6 moves to help you get strong

BY HOLLY JOHNSON

The following six exercises make up one circuit. Do the circuit two to three times each time you use this routine.

Move steadily from one exercise to the next. Rest for two minutes between each circuit. Stand in front of a full-length mirror, if possible, to make sure you're using good form. If an exercise calls for weights and you don't have free weights at home, fill a couple of water bottles or grab some canned food and start pumping.



SQUAT TO PRESS

Pick up a set of dumbbell weights (5 to 10 pounds). Stand with your feet shoulder-width apart and arms down. Engage your abdominal muscles. Squat as far as you comfortably can, looking straight ahead and letting your arms hang straight down as your body angle changes. Slowly stand up and raise your arms overhead, keeping your abs engaged. Straighten your arms, but don't lock your elbows. Keep your shoulders relaxed and down. **Do 10 to 12 reps.**



JUMPING JACKS

Stand with your feet together and arms down. Jump, opening your legs and arms outward to each side of your body. Your feet should land more than shoulder-width apart, and your arms should come up over your head. Immediately jump again to return to standing position. **Repeat as many times as you can in 30 seconds.**



BIRD DOG

Get on all fours on the floor. Engage your abs. Without arching your back, extend and raise your left arm and right leg at the same time, hold for two seconds and return to starting position. **Do 10 to 12 reps per side.**

6 TIPS FOR KEEPING EXERCISE HEALTHY

Practice proper form. It is the foundation of safe and effective exercise.

Have fun! It's easier to be consistent when you're doing something you enjoy.

Hydration is important even during the winter, so drink plenty of water.

Note muscle soreness. Moderate muscle soreness that resolves in a day or two is OK; sharp or lingering pain is not.

Be aware. Talk with someone you trust if you find yourself starting to binge, purge, severely restrict calorie intake, feel constantly fatigued or exercise to the point where your period stops. >

Start every workout with a five- to 10-minute warm-up.

The information in this article is not intended to be a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis or treatment. When participating in any exercise program, there is a possibility of physical injury; participants do so at their own risk. We encourage you to talk with a doctor before beginning any exercise program.

4 week routine chart

Week 1

	day 1			day 2			
	CIRCUIT 1	REST	CIRCUIT 2	CIRCUIT 3	CIRCUIT 1	REST	CIRCUIT 2
squat to press 10-12 REPS	●	●	●	●	●	●	
jumping jacks 30 SECONDS	●	●	●	●	●	●	
bird dog 10-12 REPS PER SIDE	●	●	●	●	●	●	
air punches 30 SECONDS	●	●	●	●	●	●	
single-leg deadlift 10-12 REPS PER LEG	●	●	●	●	●	●	
ab "marching" 30 SECONDS	●	●	●	●	●	●	

Week 2

	day 1		day 2	
	squat to press 10-12 REPS	●	●	●
jumping jacks 30 SECONDS	●	●	●	●
bird dog 10-12 REPS PER SIDE	●	●	●	●
air punches 30 SECONDS	●	●	●	●
single-leg deadlift 10-12 REPS PER LEG	●	●	●	●
ab "marching" 30 SECONDS	●	●	●	●

Week 3

	day 1		day 2	
	squat to press 10-12 REPS	●	●	●
jumping jacks 30 SECONDS	●	●	●	●
bird dog 10-12 REPS PER SIDE	●	●	●	●
air punches 30 SECONDS	●	●	●	●
single-leg deadlift 10-12 REPS PER LEG	●	●	●	●
ab "marching" 30 SECONDS	●	●	●	●

Week 4

	day 1		day 2	
	squat to press 10-12 REPS	●	●	●
jumping jacks 30 SECONDS	●	●	●	●
bird dog 10-12 REPS PER SIDE	●	●	●	●
air punches 30 SECONDS	●	●	●	●
single-leg deadlift 10-12 REPS PER LEG	●	●	●	●
ab "marching" 30 SECONDS	●	●	●	●



AIR PUNCHES

Take a "boxing" stance with your feet shoulder-width apart, one foot slightly forward and one back. Alternating arms, punch the air to the left and to the right, engaging your abdominal muscles as you keep the movement quick and controlled. **Punch for 30 seconds.**

SINGLE-LEG DEADLIFT

Stand with feet together and arms at your sides, holding a dumbbell in your left hand. Balancing on your left leg, fold your body forward to a 90-degree angle, letting your right leg extend backward and upward so it stays in line with your body. Let the weighted hand slide downward along the balancing leg. Keep the free hand against the right side of your body. **Do 10 to 12 reps per leg.**



AB "MARCHING"

Lie on your back on the floor with knees bent, feet on the floor and arms at your sides. Engage your core by tilting your pelvis so your low back is against the floor. Raise your left leg to 90 degrees. As you lower it back down, raise your right leg to 90 degrees. **"March" steadily for 30 seconds,** keeping your abs engaged at all times and the movement smooth and controlled. 

