

Walk
NEBRASKA

Be Prepared for Winter Walking

Just because the weather is frigid, doesn't mean you need to give up your outdoor walking program. If you plan ahead and have the proper clothes and accessories, it can be an invigorating and safe experience. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- **Wear the right clothing.** Walking experts have three recommendations for comfort in cold weather: (1) Dress in layers – several thin layers are better than bulky items. As you warm up while moving, you may want to shed some layers to minimize sweating, which can make you very cold and uncomfortable. (2) Cover your head with a warm and soft hat. Without a head covering, heat is lost and you'll feel cold more quickly. (3) Wear gloves or mittens, which usually keep your hands warmer.
- **Select proper footwear.** Sturdy boots or walking shoes with thick soles and deep treads are essential. Make sure your footwear is the right size to fit heavyweight socks or several pairs of socks. You may need slip-on grips or 'ice-trax' if your walking route is snowy or icy.
- **Walk with a companion.** Family, friends and even a dog are all good choices. Walking with family members or friends can provide good conversation and make the time seem shorter. A companion also provides an added safety measure in the event you might slip and fall.
- **Make yourself visible.** Drivers may have difficulty seeing you in the winter because of shorter daylight, blowing snow, or glare on sunny days. Bright colored clothing and those with LED lights or reflective tape can add to your safety. For a small amount of money, you can purchase different types of bright LED lights and reflective vests, hats, gloves and belts, as well as dog leashes and collars. On sunny days, be sure to wear sunglasses to decrease the glare.
- **Choose a good route.** Finding a safe walking route is essential in any season of the year. Those that work well in spring, summer and fall may not work in winter due to snow, ice, sleet, or rain. If you live in a part of the country that receives a lot of snow, learn which sidewalks and parking areas are usually the first to be cleaned after a storm. But remember, if conditions are bad, make the smartest choice – stay home until it is safe to get bundled up and go out.

Source:

Adapted from "Healthy Families", Eat Right Montana, January, 2009. Website: <http://www.eatrightmontana.org>
<http://crec.unl.edu/fitness/walking.shtml>

Know how. Know **now**.



Extension is a Division of the Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources at the University of Nebraska–Lincoln cooperating with the Counties and the United States Department of Agriculture.

University of Nebraska–Lincoln Extension educational programs abide with the nondiscrimination policies of the University of Nebraska–Lincoln and the United States Department of Agriculture.