



Winterize Your Training

How to modify your training for the winter months

BY ALAN CULPEPPER

Now is the time of year when getting out the door for a run becomes a bit more difficult. Winter is emotionally one of the toughest seasons as it relates to consistency in training. With colder temperatures, shorter days or the distraction of holidays and vacations, training can easily become less of a priority.

If you are preparing for a spring race, however, training through the winter is inevitable. For those who may not have a spring racing goal, the winter is still an optimal time to lay a solid foundation that can elevate performances even into the summer and fall.

Here are a few strategies for maximizing your winter training without the unnecessary risk of mental exhaustion.

BE SMART

The perfect training plan is useless without proper execution and often that requires being smart and not just tough. The last thing you want to do is put yourself at risk for injury or emotional burnout

by pushing through unreasonable conditions or circumstances. Depending on your tendency, some may look for any excuse to skip a workout while others are relentless in their commitment. It is essential to find a balance during the winter, a functional place of consistency in your emotional and physical commitment in order to get through the season healthy and ready for the next training phase. There will be times when you have to modify the training plan based on the elements, holiday events or other circumstances. Pushing

a workout back a day might make better sense than pushing through it. Getting through the winter healthy (and staying motivated) means finding a balance between being tough and being smart.

BE CREATIVE

Don't be afraid to modify your training routine or the location of your workout in order to achieve a more effective session. Runners often get fixated on their regimen, which is great unless the routine interferes with prudence. Treadmills, while scorned by some runners, are a really

good option when conditions are atrocious. There are times when using a treadmill is a better option than slipping around outside for your long run, fartlek workout or tempo run. Remind yourself that the goal is to see results, not just stick to a credence. >>

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>> For some, training on a treadmill is not the issue, but being creative about where and when to work out presents a problem. There are situations when it makes good sense to wait until mid-day to do your workout or even change your route based on snow, wind or ice. I've heard of athletes doing workouts in a parking garage because that was the only place they could find dry footing. I've never gone that far but I have shoveled snow off the inside lane of the track in order to facilitate my workout. I have also moved my runs around from day to day and have been very strategic about where I did a session in order to get the most effective results.

BE PREPARED

Winter is one season when having the right gear can really make a huge difference. With so many great options, there is no excuse for not having the proper equipment. Think ahead and look at the forecast so you can plan accordingly: If you have hill repeats and a tempo run planned for a particular week, which workout is more critical? Make that the focus for the week and ensure you get that key session in, whether that means moving your week around or going to the gym to use the treadmill. The second workout can be thought of as a bonus. Thinking ahead—and not just taking things day by day—will help ensure that throughout the course of winter you get in more quality training.

There is no way around hard work and, in the end, your results will reflect your overall execution of your training. No matter your ability level, consistency is critical—even in the winter. Despite the elements, cold weather, darkness or holiday cookies, desired results come from proper preparation. With planning, and some modifications, you can get in great training despite what winter throws your way.



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