

Shape Up! Winter 2011

Timely sports tips brought to you by the Sports Medicine Team and Iowa Ortho. For more information on Orthopaedic injuries check out the Orthoscope and The Edge Sports Medicine Newsletters on the Iowa Ortho home page.

Stay in Shape! Winter 2011, is provided by Triathlon Competitor and Team Physician for the Central Dutch, Iowa Ortho Orthopaedic Surgeon, DanielVandeLune, M.D.

Exercise is always important especially in the winter. However, during winter hypothermia can occur rapidly and special precautions need to be taken. Here are a few tips that may help you avoid hypothermia and injury from exercising in cold weather.

Warm Up. It's essential to continue your regular warm up routine before exercising. Lower temperatures can cause muscles to tighten and increase their susceptibility to injury.

Layer clothing. It's important to make sure you can maintain comfort during exercise, but keep the muscles warm and flexible. Layer clothing to allow you to control body temperature during exercise. Select exercise clothing/gear that will avoid excessive body temperature changes during exercise. Remove and add clothing as appropriate.

Temperature appropriate clothing. Wear clothing that is appropriate for where you will be exercising. Heavy clothing can increase body temperature causing you to overheat during exercise. Make sure clothing will allow you to sweat during exercise and the heat can escape away from the body. This will help to avoid the body becoming overheating during exercise and getting chilled after exercise is completed.

Cover all exposed skin. Make sure hands, feet, ears, and all areas of exposed skin are covered. These areas are very sensitive to the cold and can quickly become too cold leading to problems.

Maintain adequate hydration and nutrition. Even though it's definitely not hot outside in January in Iowa...it's still important to remember to drink plenty of fluids to avoid dehydration and continue with good nutrition to keep the body primed for exercise.

Avoid remote locations without a companion. If you're going to be in a remote location exercising or doing a sporting activity (e.g. snowboarding), always have someone with you. It doesn't take long when you're immobile outside in a cold climate for the body to get hypothermia. Remember, hypothermia can occur even when wearing appropriate winter clothing when the body is exposed to cold temperatures for a long period of time.

Pay attention to your body. Frostbite and hypothermia can occur rapidly. Some early signs of these conditions can include, numbness and a stinging sensation in the extremities, excessive shivering, lack of coordination, extreme fatigue and even slurred speech. You should seek medical attention if these conditions occur.

Exercise is important in the winter. It can enhance your mood, reduce stress levels, and help keep your body in optimum shape for when the snow finally melts and the thermometers rise in the spring!