

Tips for Winter Running

1. **Wear Reflective Apparel and Safety Lights:** In the winter there are a lot more hours of darkness. Reflective apparel and safety lights help make you visible to drivers as you run. Most winter running jackets and pants have reflective material as part of their design. Blinking lights that clip on to your clothing and reflective bands to place around your arm and legs will help make you more visible.
2. **Wear Technical Fabrics:** The number one thing you want to remember when buying apparel to run in the winter is that “cotton kills.” Winter running apparel should be made of lightweight synthetic materials. Each vendor has a different name for it, but they are designed to wick moisture away from the skin as you sweat and transport it into the air. This will keep you dryer and warmer. These fabrics also dry quicker so that when you are done running you have less of a chance of getting cold.
3. **Layering on Top:** Most novice runners wear too many top layers. That being said, wearing layers allows to add or remove layers as needed. Wearing a base layer, middle layer and an outer layer will give you the most options from getting too warm and yet maintaining core body temperatures in cold conditions. Experiment with different layers to find out what works for you.
4. **Make sure you Keep your Legs Warm:** There are many different weights of moisture wicking pants. You also have a choice between tights and loose fitting. It is best to wear moisture wicking base layers with a wind protecting outer layer for colder and windier conditions.
5. **Protect Your Head, Ears and Hands:** Over 20% of your body heat escapes through your head. There are many technical hats, earbands and neck warmers available. Your hands will get cold quickly and can also get warm quickly. Breathable gloves help when temperatures are not extreme. Mittens work better than gloves on those colder days.
6. **Wearing Moisture Wicking Socks:** Socks for winter are usually a tad thicker than summer socks. Just make sure they are moisture wicking and not cotton. Trail style wicking socks are excellent all year round. Wicking socks are vital when stepping in slush puddles.
7. **Running in Ice and Snow:** Shorten your stride by using smaller steps. This will help prevent nasty spills on ice. Winter running will use a lot of core muscles to help stabilize your base. Lower back woes can be prevented by not bending forward and keeping your upper body over your hips. Wearing studded shoes helps on ice. Running on the cleared roads is safer than snow covered sidewalks. Be aware of traffic and always yield. Cars may not be able to stop.
8. **Keep Hydrated:** It may be cold out but your body still needs to be hydrated. It is still important to carry water and sports drinks. Running with specialty waist packs will make it easier.

9. **Protect your Face:** Make sure you taking precautions to protect your face from wind and cold. Wind and sunburns can still occur during winter running. Using a thin layer of petroleum jelly on extremely cold days will help keep the face from frostbite.

10. **Wear Sunglasses:** Sun rays work double time in winter's snow. Besides the normal rays, there are reflections off the snow. Sunglasses will also protect your eyes from the elements. Polarized glasses offer the best protection, while clear lenses can be used when out in darker conditions.