

Ready to run?

Before you step outside in the frigid temperatures for your evening walk or jog, make sure you're prepared to face the cold.

By Colleen Oakley

If you're one of those women who dreads the 3 or 4 months of the year that you have to take your workout inside on the treadmill, you don't have to anymore. We talked to the experts to find out how you can head outdoors and still be comfortable and safe — even when it's snowing! "There is no reason you can't take advantage of working out outdoors during the colder weather," says Stacy Berman, owner of Stacy's Boot Camp in New York. "It keeps it interesting to keep working out in the fresh air as seasons change."

First things first

The first day of working out in the bitter cold can be a bit shocking to your system, so make sure you don't overdo it, says Berman. "Let your body get accustomed to the change in temperature," she says. "Build slowly and steadily and increase the time you spend outdoors with each routine to help yourself adjust."

Warming up

In warmer weather, you head right out the door and start jogging, but in cold weather your body is going to be stiffer, says Lori Bowden, 14-time ironman

If you dress properly, an outdoor workout in the cold can be invigorating.

Motivation tip:

Think warm thoughts

So cold outside that you can't even imagine stepping out the door? It really is all in your head. You can motivate yourself to move just by thinking warm thoughts. "Focus on the warm cup of tea you just drank, sitting by a fire and the great feeling you'll have when you've completed your exercise," says Tina Castaldi, owner of Castaldi's Killer Boot Camp in Toluca Lake, CA.

winner. "Make sure you ease into your workout," she says. "Start slowly and stretch a little longer afterwards."

If it's so cold that you can't even bear the thought of stepping outside, warm up inside, suggests Grace de Simone of the Gold's Gym Fitness Institute. "You can march in place moving your arms briskly or climb up and down your stairs," she

says. The warmer you are before you head outside, the easier the transition will be.

When darkness falls

Winter days mean shorter days, and you'll most likely find yourself working out in the dark. This can add another element of danger, so there are a few precautions you should take.

