

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Safety Tips for Winter Exercise**

Getting outside to combat the winter blues is something many who live through Wisconsin winters like to do. Exercise in the cold, fresh air can be invigorating and a natural mood booster. Clear Lake Physical Therapy and Rehab Specialists (CLPTRS) encourages outdoor winter exercise but cautions it should be done safely.

Before taking a winter walk or run outdoors, make sure you properly warm up all your muscles and joints by stretching for several minutes.

Temperature and moisture, as well as the length of time that you will be exercising outside, are key factors in planning safe cold-weather activities. Wind and cold together make up the wind chill, a common element in winter weather forecasts. Wind chill extremes can make exercising outdoors unsafe even with warm clothing. Any exposed skin can result in frostbite.

A mistake when exercising in cold weather some may make is dressing too warmly. Exercise generates a considerable amount of heat — enough to make you feel like it's much warmer than it really is. The evaporation of sweat, however, pulls heat from your body and you feel chilled.

Dress in layers that you can remove as soon as you start to sweat and then put back on as needed. Your first layer should be a moisture-wicking material, to keep your skin as dry as possible.

With less daylight in the winter, exercising can also take on the added challenge of your safety when it comes to your visibility to others. Take advantage of the daylight and get in your winter workout when it's easier to see you walking on the road, skating on the lake, or sledding down the hill. If you are out in the dark, make sure you have reflective clothing and either a head lamp or light clipped to your back, especially if you are out along a roadside. Make sure your gear always makes you visible.

Another way to wear appropriate gear is to wear a helmet whenever skating, skiing, snowboarding, or sledding is involved. Many winter activities involve going fast. Add a hard surface like ice, as well as slippery surfaces that can add a lack of control and these activities can become dangerous. Especially if you hit your head, possibly causing a Traumatic Brain Injury (TBI).

An additional winter exercise safety tip is to know your limits. If you are a beginner skier, stick to the smaller hills where you feel comfortable. Don't overestimate your reaction time if you encounter someone less skilled than you getting in your way on the slopes or the sledding hill.

Also, supervise children when they play on the ice, sled or snow tube down the hill, or try something new to them like snowboarding. Children don't always know their limits or are aware of their surroundings, which can lead to crashes or falls.

Another way to stay safe when exercising outside in the winter is to make sure you hydrate. When it's cold out, you often don't feel as thirsty as when it's hot, but that doesn't mean you don't need water. Make sure you drink plenty of water when exercising and post-workout, even if you don't feel thirsty.

If you have been enjoying outdoor exercise during the winter season and have hurt yourself, please call CLPTRS to see if we may be able to help you. We take pride in providing exceptional care that focuses on Restoring Human Performance. You don't need a doctor referral to receive our services. Please call us at 715-263-4103 to find out how we may serve you.

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For more information, please contact:  
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***About Clear Lake Physical Therapy and Rehab Specialists***

Clear Lake Physical Therapy and Rehab Specialists has three therapy locations in Western Wisconsin, as well as The Performance Center which is a class exercise space. We treat our patients with compassion as we work with them to restore human performance.