

Training during winter: how to adapt

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It is no easy feat to keep up your training when winter comes. Even professional athletes struggle with the chills and challenges of the season, which is why many of them end up seeking out warmer shores in the winter months. At the hpc, for instance, you will find European athletes escaping the cold of their countries to come bathe in our December sunshine. And the same goes for our South African sports men and women when the Northern Hemisphere has its summer. But for those of us who are not professional athletes, migrating tactics are not an option. Luckily, South Africa doesn't have winters comparable to those of, for instance, the Scandinavian countries or Canada. Nonetheless, taking precautions when winter closes in on you is essential. And with this in mind, here are seven tips to keep you fit and fighting in the frost:

1 Immune system

Give your immune system the support it needs by ensuring that you eat healthily and sleep well. You can also supplement your diet with juice-powdered super foods, super juices, vitamin D3, Vitamin C, certain amino acids and the like. This should be done throughout the year and not just in winter, but it is important to give this component even greater attention 2-3 months prior to winter.



2. Clothing: dress in layers

A big mistake people make is dressing to warm themselves, which can cause sweating during exercise. The layer of perspiration that forms on the skin creates a chill which might, in turn, produce a cold. The solution is to dress in layers. Start with shirts made from polypropylene materials. Avoid cotton because it will stick to your skin when it becomes damp or wet. The next layer can be a fleece or wool layer topped with a waterproof, breathable outer layer like a jacket or vest that can be removed as you warm up during the session.



3. Cover your outer extremities

These are your hands, ears, nose and lips. The reason for this is that the human body has a survival mechanism that causes circulation of blood to move to the body's internal core when it is really cold. This means that blood gets moved away from the extremities when you are in a cold environment, which causes them to get cold first and feel negative side effects like numbness and, in the worst cases, frost bite! So if you want to keep warm and safe, wear gloves and a beanie.

**4. Hydration**

This is important in any kind of weather, but in cold weather you are inclined not to drink enough fluids. Be sure to hydrate!

**5. Warm-up**

As always ensure that you warm up properly. If possible, start your warm-ups indoors and move outside just before you start breaking a sweat.

**6. Pay attention to weather conditions**

Take weather predictions into account and dress accordingly. Be sure not to get wet and insulate yourself against penetrating winds.

**7. Feet**

Do not over-layer your feet, because this will cause them to sweat and become cold. Choose shoes with a low amount of mesh and use wicking socks. These socks are made of a blend of spandex, nylon, and polyester that keeps moisture away from the skin.

So if you are training outside during winter, cover up and make sure you have a dry change of clothes handy. And for those of you who think winter is made for snuggling and soup: man up and face the cold! 🌈

