**Increase Your Activity to Increase ROL**

[In a recent poll](https://news.yahoo.com/desire-exercise-drop-third-winter-090113975.html), 31% of surveyed adults reported that they exercise less in the winter than they do during the rest of the year. Cold temperatures and the winter blues can make it harder to find that spark of motivation when you're snug on your couch or focused on your laptop. And many more folks who've been taking work breaks in their home gyms might be struggling to stay active as they transition back to the office.

If you're feeling like your exercise habits might be slipping into hibernation, try one of these three simple ideas to keep moving and keep improving your Return on Life this winter.

**1. Bring your timer to work.**

While working at home during the pandemic, we all learned how important it is [to take breaks from work, stand up, and move around](https://www.nytimes.com/2021/09/08/well/move/work-breaks-sitting-metabolic-health.html). The popular ["Pomodoro Technique"](https://todoist.com/productivity-methods/pomodoro-technique) breaks down work into 25-minute blocks, separated by 5 minute breaks, and then a longer 10-15 minute break every 100 minutes. You can adapt this idea to your specific work environment and use those small breaks to do whatever physical activity is appropriate: taking a quick walk, climbing stairs, doing some jumping jacks, squats, or pushups, stretching. These active breaks add up and can have a major impact on your posture, your metabolism, and your comfort.

**2. Make social time an active time.**

Is your bar trivia team or book club starting to make you feel a little stir crazy? Have you and your spouse seen every movie at your local multiplex? Try working some more active activities into your social calendar. Recruit one of your friends or family members to be your gym buddy. Instead of driving to meet a loved one at your favorite cafe, bundle up, order that coffee to go, and chat while you window shop on Main Street or stroll through a local park. Or sync up your 5-minute work breaks with a co-worker who will keep you company while you march up and down the stairs or do some lunges.

**3. Try a new sport.**

If you're snowed out of your favorite warm-weather sports, try adding something new to your offseason. Learning how to ski or snowboard can be another fun activity to try with friends and family, as are the community ice skating rinks that pop up during the winter months. Cross-country skiing can appeal to runners, cyclists, and long-distance walkers. Or start getting more out of your health club membership by hitting the racquet ball and basketball courts.

But if the only thing keeping you from your usual morning run is the cold weather, consider adding an extra layer of clothing so that you can gain some serious health benefits. [Harvard Medical School](https://www.health.harvard.edu/staying-healthy/the-wonders-of-winter-workouts) reports that exercising in cold weather can improve your endurance. Your heart and cooling systems don't have to work as hard in the winter either, so you might be able to exercise longer and more efficiently. And if you’re the kind of person who’s susceptible to seasonal affective disorder, getting outside and boosting your exposure to sunlight can improve your mood.

Seniors and anyone with underlying health conditions should discuss cold-weather exercise with their doctors before hitting those winter trails. Everyone else should make sure they’re adequately covered, particularly your head, hands, and feet, as your body tends to concentrate blood flow to your core when it’s cold. A cold sunny day can still be bad for your skin, so wear sunscreen and lip balm. And add a couple extra minutes of stretching and light warm-up exercises to get your blood flowing, such as arm circles or knee lifts.

Have you tried any new activities this winter that have improved your Return on Life? It’s not too late to plot a family ski trip on your 2023 $Lifeline! Give us a call and let’s talk about making the rest of your winter memorable, healthy, and fulfilling.