

Active Lifestyles

5 Smart Ways To

Enjoy Walking In The Winter

Going Green:
Simple Steps for
N.C. Families

If you think walking stops when it gets cold, think again! Here's what you need to walk smart all winter long whether you're walking in your neighborhood or around town on errands.

Smart clothes for your body

- ▶ Here are three things to do in colder weather. 1) Dress in layers. Several thin layers are better than one bulky layer. You will warm up as you move. You can shed layers so you don't sweat too much. 2) Wear a hat. Pick one that is soft and warm, not scratchy. Without a hat, you lose heat off your head and you'll get cold faster. 3) Wear gloves or mittens to keep your hands warmer.

Smart shoes and stuff for your feet

- ▶ For both comfort and safety, choices in footwear are really important. Sturdy boots or walking shoes with thick soles and deep treads are important. Make sure that your footwear is the right size to fit with heavier socks. Wear a pair of thick wool or synthetic socks. If it is really cold, add a pair of thin, inner socks. If your shoes get wet during your walk, be sure to dry them out.

Smart buddies for fun and safety

- ▶ It's always nice to have a walking buddy. Family, friends and dogs are all great. Think of a dog as a treadmill with fur - walking is good for their health and yours! Walking with a family member or friend gives you time to bond. Having someone to talk to makes the miles seem shorter in any season. In winter, a buddy also gives you an added measure of safety in case you slip or fall.

Smart accessories for everyone

- ▶ Visibility is a concern for winter walkers. Drivers may have a hard time seeing you due to shorter days. You and your pet can walk safely with LED lights and/or reflective clothing. For under \$15, you can buy different types of LED lights and reflective vests, hats, gloves and belts. You can even get dog leashes and collars. On days with lots of glare, walkers need sunglasses.

Smart choices in your route

- ▶ Finding a safe walking route is critical any time of the year. Routes that are good at other times may not work so well in the winter. Look for routes that drain well and have plenty of street lights. If you live in a snowy part of the state, learn which sidewalks and parking areas are the first to be cleared after a storm. If conditions are bad, stay home until it is safe to get bundled up and go out.