

Winter workouts

If your idea of winter exercise is lifting a cup of hot chocolate, check out these fun activities and feel great while you shed pounds

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By Jay Somerset

Canadian winters are inevitably cold, snowy and long. It's tempting to succumb to the coziness of your couch, but this year, why not embrace the season? Put on your toque and woolly socks and head outdoors. These six calorie-busting activities will bring a whole new meaning to playing in the snow.

NOTE: *Calories burned are based on a 145 lb. woman working out for half an hour.*

What is it Snow shovelling

Calories burned 200

Target areas Abs, biceps, butt, calves, deltoids, and quadriceps

Why it's good for you This is one of those needs-to-be-done jobs that doubles as a hefty workout. "Shovelling snow can require as much energy as running 15 km per hour," says Jennifer Palmer, a physiotherapist in London, Ont. Skip your regular workout and hit the driveway on snowy days.

Getting started Lifting snow, especially if it's wet, is like picking up heavy weights, so ease into it, and make sure you stretch, warm up and cool down. A proper shovel is also crucial. The [Canadian Physiotherapy Association](#) recommends using a shovel long enough so you can slightly bend your knees, flex your back and lift. Ergonomic shovels with curved handles are especially good, because they allow you to keep your back straighter while lifting.

What is it Snowshoeing

Calories burned 216

Target areas Butt, calves, hamstrings, triceps and quadriceps

Why it's good for you Think of snowshoeing as the winter combination of walking and hiking. "Snowshoeing burns up to twice the number of calories as walking at the same speed," says Declan Connolly, an associate professor of physical education at the University of Vermont. Plus, the simple joy of walking on untouched snow is enough to raise anyone's spirits.

Getting started Leave your Bjorn Borg-era shoes hanging on the wall beside the fireplace and get yourself a light pair of aluminum snowshoes, about \$180 at [Canadian Tire](#).

What is it Tobogganing

Calories burned 226

Target areas Abs, calves, hamstrings and quadriceps

Why it's good for you Remember being a kid and dreading the climb up the hill after gliding down it in mere seconds? That's where the workout comes in, especially when you have to tow a sled and child up with you. Like Sisyphus pushing the rock or a gigantic StairMaster, the more you climb, the better the exercise.

Getting started Grab the ol' been-in-the-family-since-1954 wooden toboggan, GT Sno Racer(\$48), flying carpet(\$2)or cafeteria tray and hold on tight.

