

Beat winter doldrums by using a pool indoors

If you think swimming pools are just for summer fun, think again. Winter is a great time to take advantage of an indoor pool to get some low-impact exercise. Exercising in water offers many benefits no matter what the season. Try it this winter because:

- It's low impact, so it's easy on joints that may get sore with activities like running or jumping.
- It helps you be more flexible. In the water, you may be able to move your arms and legs in ways that are difficult on land.
- Warm water pools can feel soothing, especially in cold weather.
- It helps people with arthritis or orthopedic/joint injuries to improve joint movement without pain or strain from traditional exercise.
- It offers a nice change from land exercises — and variety may help you stick with a workout.
- A pool workout helps keep you cool, even if you're working hard.
- Water exercise may improve mood and mental well-being.
- Water offers natural resistance that can tone and strengthen muscles.



Don't swear off pool exercise because you can't swim.

There are many exercises that can be done in the water that don't include traditional swimming. If you can't swim, stick to the shallow end or wear a life jacket. Try these exercises:

- Walk or jog from end to end in the shallow end.
- Grab the edge of the pool and kick your legs from side to side.
- Try the "superman": hold the edge of the pool and point your body out straight behind you. Keep your body in a straight line and hold the pose for a few seconds.
- Do jumping jacks in chest-deep water

Many local fitness centers have pools for exercise and even water aerobics classes. A community center, hotel or school may offer public swim times as well.



To help keep public pools clean and to avoid illness:

- Shower before and after using a pool
- Don't get pool water in your mouth
- Don't use the pool if you're sick, especially if you have had vomiting or diarrhea within the last week
- Stay out of the pool if you have an open wound that's not fully healed or fully covered with a waterproof bandage

Sources: National Institutes of Health and Centers for Disease Control and Prevention