

Staying motivated when running in the winter

Take it from someone who has spent the vast majority of his 15 years of running in cold and unforgiving climates: running in the winter is tough. It's tough to get out from under the warm covers in the morning, it's tough to get motivated about improvement and progress with an extra 15 pounds of clothes slowing you down, and it's tough not to bag a run because of snowy, wet, and miserable conditions.

In this article, I am going to highlight five tips and strategies you can use to get out of bed, stay motivated, and have your best winter training segment yet. If you want your Winter miles to bring Spring PR's, try these five tricks:

1. Strategically place reminders of your goals when you know need the motivation

I am a runner who is very motivated by outcome goals. I set very specific objectives and long-term goals and being reminded of my ambitions when the going gets tough can keep me motivated during even the most difficult training conditions. Therefore, one of the best strategies for me to stay motivated is to put reminders of my goals near the areas/situations that present the biggest barriers to my training.

For many people, getting out of bed in the morning and getting excited about running in the cold leads to many missed runs. A good solution is to place an index card with your goal written in big, bright letters by the alarm clock. This way, when you go to hit the snooze button, you see your goal staring you in the face and you can ask yourself: "how much do you want it today". If that doesn't get you motivated to get out from under the covers, you need a new goal.

If you run after work, you can put your goal on the dashboard of your car. This way, when you start to talk yourself out of driving to the gym or come up with an excuse when you walk in the door, you can remind yourself what you hope to accomplish.

This is a very simple way to keep your training on track if you're a runner who is very motivated by your goals, but needs a little reminder or a nudge once in a while to keep yourself on target.

2. Have a heater in the bedroom for when you wake up or snooze

If you watch *The Office*, you may remember [the episode](#) that Michael Scott sets up his Foreman grill so he can wake up to the smell of cooking bacon. While the idea backfired on Michael, you can use the same concept to successfully get out of bed on cold mornings.

The trick is to buy a small [ceramic heater](#) with a remote (you can find cheap versions for \$20-30 bucks, you don't need anything fancy). Keep the remote by your bedside or alarm clock and when your alarm goes off in the morning, use the remote to turn the heater on full blast.

Within a few minutes, the heater will have your room toasty warm and the dreaded thought of getting out of those warm and comfy sheets will dissipate quickly. I also like to get dressed to run in the room when it's nice and warm to help me forget it's going to be cold the first few steps.

3. Use small, local races to keep you focused

Perhaps the hardest part about training well in the winter is that your big goal races seem so far off. It can be easy to trick yourself into thinking that a few missed days now won't have any effect in March.

Unfortunately, January and February are the important building blocks of training if you want to race well in March and April.

To keep your focus more in-tune and targeted, try signing up for some local races as workouts. Many areas have small 5k and 10ks during the winter that aren't famous or that don't have lots of participants (head to your local running store or [check online for races](#) in your area). Not only does the "threat" of competition keep you motivated, but it's one less workout that week you have to run alone.

4. Running buddies to keep you accountable

You've probably heard this one before, but it's one of the easiest ways to stay on track in the winter. I can only imagine how many workouts I would have missed as a professional if I hadn't had a team to meet-up with every morning. Not only do they help keep you accountable by "forcing" you to show up, but misery loves company. Grinding out mile repeats in the snow and below zero temperatures isn't quite as bad when you have 3 or 4 or your running friends by your side to commiserate with.

If you don't have a few running buddies that you can try and team up with, check out some of the local running clubs. Just like you, the club members need friendly faces on a cold morning and they're usually struggling for numbers in the winter and they would be glad to have you.

5. Get the right equipment

When you have the right clothing and equipment, running in the winter can actually be quite enjoyable. If you need advice on exactly what you should be wearing or what you might need to purchase, get advice from your local specialty running store.

Another trick that works well (especially for women) is to periodically buy new winter running gear. It doesn't have to be expensive or a big item, but adding a new top or base layer can make getting out the door a little more fun if you like to be fashionable.

These are just a few tips that can make training this Winter a little easier and keep you more consistent.