

# New Hampshire Knee Center

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## TIPS TO AVOID INJURY THIS WINTER

Research shows that preparing for and using caution when participating in outdoor activities during the winter months can significantly reduce the risk of injury. According to Dr. O'Neill, the following tips will help reduce the risk of injury from outdoor activities this winter:

1. **Maintain a strong fitness level year round.** To accomplish this, include cross training, yoga and Pilates in your regimen. Snow sports are very physically demanding and require balance and flexibility, two qualities that decrease as you age..
2. **Update your equipment when necessary.** Technology innovations typically equate to improved safety and function. This is especially true with the new fabrics for cold weather clothing.
3. **Vary your types of winter equipment.** Keep different types of equipment on hand for changing conditions such as cross country skis, snow shoes, crampons, ice skates, Alpine skis, and snowboards. It's often a good idea to do one activity in the morning and switch to a different one in the afternoon. Cross training reduces fatigue — and it's fun!
4. **Hydrate, eat right, and get plenty of sleep.** These three things are particularly important outside in winter conditions as your body is constantly working to maintain an ideal temperature. DO NOT go into the woods in the winter unless you are prepared, experienced, and fit.
5. **Warm up, stretch and cool down.** There's no rule against clipping out of your skis at the top of the lift to get a good stretch of your calves, quads and hamstrings. Also, a light jog or swim after a long day in the woods can help loosen your muscles.
6. **Look for groomed trails.** Conditions in the Northeast can change by the hour. Warm up with groomed runs before hitting the back country.
7. **Call it quits by 3:00 pm.** This is particularly important for both young and old. As skies darken, the lack of lighting can make it challenging to see, and falling temperatures often create icy conditions. On the slopes, many tired folks are making a bee-line for the lodge so be especially alert for other skiers at the end of the day.

8. **You're not Bode!** Pace yourself, and don't place performance over comfort.
9. **Be the ball!** Take a moment before your activity to mentally prepare with some visualization exercises. Also, you don't need alcohol to enjoy winter activities – this stuff is already fun.