

9 Winter Running Tips

Boston born and raised race director Dave McGillivray knows a thing or two about the cold.

By [Dave McGillivray](#) Monday, December 15, 2014, 3:52 pm

Seeing that it's "Winter Week" at *Runner's World*, here are a few observations and tips on the subject from someone who has lived in the cold, unpredictable northeast all his life...

- The toughest part about winter running for many of us in cold weather climates is not necessarily the cold but the fact that there aren't many [races](#) during December to March, so it becomes a little more challenging to stay focused and to stay committed to our training on a daily basis. It is easier to focus on a race you have coming up in a month versus a race that is 3-4 months away.
- Although I don't particularly love the cold and nasty weather myself, I have conditioned myself to accept it as just another challenge I need to overcome. I've lived in the Boston area my whole life and I don't have any plans to leave. Instead of complaining about it and I look at it as something that is just going to make me tougher.
- You can cope with almost any weather conditions as long as you simply dress properly. If you get uncomfortable running in cold weather, it's not the weather at fault, it is you. It's not rocket science. There is so much "stuff" out there these days you should feel like you are running in 70-degree, sunny weather even when it is 20 degrees and snowing (well, sort of, but you get my point). And, a side benefit of having to have to wear 20 lbs. of extra clothing during the winter is the feeling of lightness you get in the spring when you can finally shed all those extra layers off!
- Be smart. If there is a lot of snow and slush on roads or sidewalks, find areas to run where there is very little traffic, even if you have to drive to these areas. And, try not to run during rush hour – you are no match for an 18-wheeler.
- Personally, I typically don't run on [treadmills](#), although I know many who do. However, for me, there is nothing like running outside and I will always choose that unless it truly is dangerous.
- As a race director, Thanksgiving Day is the last day I direct a race in cold weather climates until the spring. I don't mind running outside in the cold but I don't get all excited about directing a race in the lousy weather. Also, it can become even more difficult to get volunteers to help and consultants to work when the conditions are awful.
- Another drawback is that it stays dark a lot later in the morning and gets dark earlier in the afternoon. If you don't like running in the dark, then your window of opportunity becomes really narrow. So, running in the winter requires a bit more planning than summer.
- Not all of us have access to an indoor track facility either. They are usually few and far between and if you do find one, they are usually fully scheduled with team or club workouts or competitions. Besides, who wants to do a 10-mile workout around and around and around and around a 200-meter track anyway?

- For me, the most frustrating aspect of winter running is not all the challenges I have stated above. It's the insensitive and clueless drivers who see you on the side of the road running towards them but could care less and just stay on the accelerator versus slowing down a bit and splashing tons of slush and sludge on you without blinking an eye. I'm still trying to figure out a way to get back at them in my second life...ha!

So, keep running, keep safe, and keep warm!