

Running in Cold & Inclement Weather Conditions

OVERVIEW

Like any outdoor activity, cold and inclement weather can sometimes pose an obstacle for runners. Use the following tips to ensure the health and safety of your kids when running outdoors in less than ideal conditions—yes, it can be done!

COLD WEATHER

The biggest concern, and probably the easiest to combat, is that of being outside in cold weather. Humans are designed to be effective in many climates and temperatures, including the cold. Think about it- explorers have trekked across the ice to both poles. We can thrive in the cold! With a little bit of preparation and a strong desire to be active, we can kick our fears of cold weather to the curb. And get faster along the way.

Benefits of Running Outside in the Cold

We all know kids need to be active at all times of the year (that's why you have a Marathon Kids run club!). This holds especially true during colder months when physical activity and recreation opportunities may be more limited. In addition to getting their recommended 60 minutes of MVPA (moderate-to-vigorous physical activity), going outside allows kids a chance to briefly escape from certain germs and bacteria that get recycled indoors. The added sunlight also provides them with essential amounts of Vitamin D, helping to fight certain diseases and leading to better calcium absorption and stronger bones.

How Cold is Too Cold?

Generally speaking, it's safe to be outside up to -17° F. According to research by the American College of Sports Medicine, the risk of frostbite and hypothermia increases at a greater rate past that point. That being said, Marathon Kids does not recommend kids being outside for long periods of time in sub-freezing weather. As a general rule of thumb, temperatures above 32° F are safe for outdoor activity.

**When looking at outdoor temperatures, pay attention to the windchill factor or the "feels like" temperature to get the most accurate idea of comfort level for your runners.*

Tips for Running in the Cold

Once you've determined the temperature is warm enough for your kids to run outside, follow these tips to keep them safe and healthy:

Layer Properly: Bundle kids up in multiple breathable layers. Refrain from too many heavy layers, as too much sweat can lead to kids' bodies cooling too quickly. Remove a layer if overheating begins to occur. Warm gloves, hats and socks are all important pieces of layering. If any layer becomes wet, have kids return indoors and change to dry clothing immediately.

Tips for Running in the Cold - Continued

Warm-Up: Before going outside, ensure kids are properly warmed up. Refer to the warm-up activities on your Session Cards for warm-up activities and ideas, or simply have your kids walk briskly or jog for a few minutes.

Take Periodic Indoor Breaks: Depending on the length of your run club session, it may be beneficial to take a break halfway through to head inside and have your kids warm up, dry off or change layers. Plan for an indoor break at least every 20-30 minutes.

Stay Hydrated: Proper hydration—focus on water or natural fruit/veggie juices—is key to regulating internal body temperature, including in cold weather.

Look Out for Signs of Hypothermia & Frostbite: Review the American Academy of Pediatrics “Winter Safety Tips” at www.aap.org for an overview of the symptoms of both hypothermia and frostbite. Talk to your kids about what they should look for.

OTHER TYPES OF INCLEMENT WEATHER

Rain, hail, sleet and snow can all play a factor in the safety level of your run club sessions. In addition to the tips above, pay attention to the following:

Clear Running Route: Ensure your route is free of ice, snow and other weather-related obstacles that may pose a hazard.

Stay Visible: If your route takes your runners near traffic, be sure they are wearing reflective clothing and can be easily seen by drivers.

RUNNING INDOORS

If all else fails and weather conditions truly aren't conducive to a safe environment for your runners during a particular session, it's okay to stay inside. Here are some ideas to keep indoor sessions fun and exciting:

Create an Indoor Track: Use hallways, stairwells, multipurpose rooms, gyms or classrooms to create a course. Get creative. Have your kids help choose the route. They'll love running through an area they normally are only allowed to walk in!

Incorporate Running Games: At the back of your set of Session Cards you'll find running games designed to get your kids moving, regardless of how large or how small your space is. Based on the amount of time spent playing a game, you'll be able to easily calculate how much distance your kids should color in on their Mileage Logs.