



## Oh, The Weather Outside is Frightful – 5 Winter Survival Tips

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When the thermometer dips, as Maritimers we're reminded why we are "such a hardy lot". Let's consider the challenges winter creates for caregivers and their loved ones.

Keep Warm - Cold damp temperatures can lead to frostbite. To ensure the body's temperature doesn't dip too low when you're outside, dress in layers, choosing warm clothing and insulated boots. When it's really cold, wear a scarf over your mouth to protect your mouth and lungs. If it's damp, wear water resistant outer layers including mittens (which are better than gloves for cold).

It's also important to monitor inside temperatures. Those who are ill or have poor circulation often have problems regulating their body temperature. Layering clothing and using heating pads and electric blankets can all help you stay warm, but it's important the heating devices are not too hot and that they have an automatic shut off switch. Conserve heat in your house by keeping windows and doors closed in rooms you're not using. It can also help increase the temperature during bath time.

Keep Safe - Be cautious when going outside, especially when there's snow and ice. Wear boots with good traction, ideally with ice grips that make walking substantially safer. Remember to take off these boots when coming inside to avoid slipping on melted snow. If you are using a walker, make sure it is also dry before you try to use it inside. Some people have an outside and an inside walker to avoid build up of ice, snow, or salt on the walker.

Protect and Moisturize Your Skin - Use good moisturizers as skin can become dry during our long cold winters. Always moisturize exposed skin before going outside. Physicians may recommend a basic moisturizer for cold weather such as Eucerin, which also has a line specifically for diabetics. O'Keefes Working Hands is highly recommended by many northerners; they also have a "hard working skin care" for your feet. It's also important to drink lots of liquids. Hydration can help with poor circulation, dry skin, and other health conditions.

Eat Healthy - There is a reason our Maritime cookbooks are filled with recipes for hardy stews, soups, and steaming beverages. These kinds of food help keep us warm, while providing needed nutrients. Vegetables and fruits from the fall harvest will give us the vitamins and nutrients we need during winter months. Nothing says morning like a hot bowl of porridge with added blueberries from a local farm.

Be Happy - During the holidays our homes are filled with bright lights inside and out. Historically, it has been a Maritime custom to 'keep the light burning' throughout the winter. We now know that some people are affected by lack of light as the days become shorter and darker, and many people are using solar and other light sources to keep the light around all winter. You can also purchase light therapy machines to help with depression over the winter.

During the winter, enjoy both inside and outside activities and hobbies. Keep warm, keep the house well lit, enjoy some background music and a warm cup of nog/tea, and you will survive our Maritime winter!