

Bad Weather Workouts

By Lea Lessard for
WeightWatchers.com



An appealing spring day can do wonders for an exercise resolution, but the opposite can be true as well. It's hard to exercise outdoors when the weather's grim. How can those new to fitness carry over an outdoor exercise routine when weather keeps them in?

Now more than ever, there are "hidden benefits of moving indoors," says corporate fitness consultant Nancy Burstein. Testing the options at a gym can not only add interest to one's workout, but health benefits as well.

"The key to a lifelong involvement with fitness is having a variety of activities at your disposal, so you don't have to put exercise on the shelf just because the weather's bad," says Burstein.

Brooke MacInnis, spokesperson for the International Health Racquet & Sportsclub Association, points out that an indoor workout can be more well rounded. "It's not a bad thing to exercise various parts of your body. If you jog outside you might miss the nice view, but indoors you might discover you can do something as crazy as kick boxing or boot camp."

According to MacInnis, there has been an explosion of new types of programs and services at gyms, especially in "mind-body fitness" classes such as yoga, Pilates and tai chi. Since 1990, the percentage of health clubs offering yoga has expanded from 30 percent to 86 percent. Such programs have lured Americans to gyms—membership has doubled in the last fifteen years. In turn, "the industry has grown in its ability to identify what members are looking for," says MacInnis. There are now specialty facilities in most major cities and suburbs, for instance, including women-only gyms or gyms for older clients.

Some of the gym-based courses that can help you diversify your workout include:

Belly Dancing

Scarves and all.

Body Sculpting

Free-weight and mat exercises to condition specific parts of the body.

Cycling

A fast-paced interval workout on a stationary bicycle set to motivating music that features a teacher's encouragement.

Jump Rope

A cardiovascular workout, and not just for kids.

Kick Boxing

A Thai martial art, in which a boxing bag receives the brunt of your ill will.

Pilates

A set of conditioning exercises to develop strength in the "core"-- that means abdominals and back - lengthen the spine, and generally build muscle tone.

Yoga

In many shapes and sizes. Many gyms offers styles ranging from meditation and breathing-based seated exercises to aerobically charged sequences.