ENJOY THIS WINTER BY BEING PHYSICALLY ACTIVE

ITH the dark evenings and the worsening weather conditions, winter can sometimes pose a challenge to even the most discerning physically active HSE worker. However, with our reasonable climate there are no excuses for not being active during the winter season. Calm Casey, Physical Activity Co-ordinator, shares some tips.

MOVE MORE
I AM often asked, "What is the best type of exercise?" The answer is simply, "The one you do and like."
Try and find ways to move more daily.
Do your best to accumulate 10,000 steps per day. Use a simple pedometer or download a pedometer application from your smartphone and you will find yourself looking for opportunities to walk more.
You will probably start talking the stairs instead of the lift.
You may perhaps park the furthest distance from the door instead of driving around the car park for ten minutes before work looking to park as close as possible to the door.
If possible leave your car at home or a distance from your worksite and commute actively. Walk around your estate, park or garden when you get home in the evenings or nab a friend and take an hour to catch up.

HOME GYM
FOR those who simply can't get out, you could also set up a home or office gym by buying some inexpensive equipment such as kettlebells or exercise bands and design a simple exercise circuit. There are numerous workout sessions for every type of physical activity on Youtube.
There are a large number of HSE work sites now offering exercise classes during lunch and straight after work.

LOCAL GYM
YOU could join a local gym or fitness studio and avail of the wide range of classes available in the community. For some gyms, you don't have to be a member, you can just sign up for one of their classes.

YOUR GEAR
TRY and select the correct training gear. The breathability and waterproofing of training gear has come a long way and can make the harshest conditions bearable. You can pretty much participate in any sport all year long by choosing the correct gear and dressing appropriately. Normally in winter, you should be looking for gear that covers the whole body and keeps you warm, dry and allows perspiration to evaporate.
Layering is the best advice for being active outdoors. Maybe start by wearing a couple of layers and as you get warmer, you can peel the top layer off.
The best and most comfortable materials for breathability are polyester, gore-tex or merino wool. Surfers are able to withstand the winter north Atlantic swells and stay in the water for hours at 6 degrees so anything on land can be possible.

BE SAFE, BE SEEN
NO matter where you live - rural or urban - you should wear high visible and reflective garments that can reflect from the front, sides and behind while exercising outdoors. You must be visible. There are bike lights as powerful as car lights on the market today and make it possible to cycle at night. Head torch or lamps can be used by runners, joggers and walkers for lighting in rural areas on and off road. It's about being prepared properly.

CHOOSE THE RIGHT ACTIVITY FOR YOU
IDEALLY, you should try and fit in a quick session before work, during lunch or straight after work if you like being active during daylight hours. You should aim for a minimum of 30 minutes of exercise per day, a minimum of five days a week.
The key thing is to exercise at the right intensity. Intensity is how hard a person works to do a specific exercise. You should be working out at a moderate to vigorous intensity.

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