

GO!

GET ACTIVE

Layering up for winter fun

By **Debbie Juniewicz**

Contributing Writer

Warm, sunny days are likely months away, but chilly temperatures and even a flurry are no reason to hibernate.

Barring dangerous conditions, most parks and trails are open year-round. And winter means the addition of seasonal fun like skating at the MetroParks Ice Rink.

A little preparation can go a long way toward enjoying the great outdoors all winter. It all comes down to layers – specifically the base, insulation and weather layers.

“If you’re going to be active, dress so that you’re a little chilly while standing still and bring an extra layer to put on if you plan to stop and be still,” said Angela York, Five Rivers MetroParks special events coordinator. “Dress in layers with thinner fabric closest to your skin. The layer against your skin should be wool, silk or a synthetic tech fabric – as these will wick moisture away from the skin in case you get sweaty.”

Layers shouldn’t be limited to the torso.

“I’m always amazed how people layer 14 coats on top, but only wear one pair of pants in colder weather,” said Jordan Hart, MetroParks outdoor recreation coordinator. “Don’t forget that you can layer below the belt as well.”

And remember mom’s sage advice from your childhood.

“Don’t forget to have a hat,” said Kelly Kingery, MetroParks outdoor recreation specialist. “Heat rises, so you don’t want it to escape out the top of your head. For your hands, mittens are nice because you can keep your fingers together and



Layering can be the key to enjoying the great outdoors all winter. CONTRIBUTED

they’ll help keep each other warm, but they are more cumbersome for detailed work. Gloves can help with work and play, but you can still make good snowballs with good fitting mittens.”

Andy Niekamp, of the Dayton Hikers, has both a low and high-tech cold-weather tip.

“The low-tech tip is to drink plenty of water and avoid winter dehydration,” Niekamp said. “Most people tend to drink less water in the winter because they sweat less, but you’ll exhale more moisture on a cold day as your lungs work harder to humidify the air you breathe. Proper hydration is important for staying warm. Your body needs water to help maintain a temperature balance. A dehydrated person gets cold easier.”

Niekamp’s high-tech tip is investing in a heated vest.

“A heated vest uses a rechargeable USB battery to heat coils located inside the

vest,” he said. “The coils are usually located in the pockets and on the back and neck areas. Most heated vests have three settings – low, medium, and high – and a fully charged battery should last 10 hours on the low setting.”

Still not quite ready to head out on the trail? Members of the Dayton Hikers share their tips for staying warm and safe.

■ **Rosemary D’Aloia:** I often walk and hike in the dark and cold. The key to me is layering your clothes. Wool is amazingly warm as a base layer. A fleece neck gaiter is my second suggestion.

■ **Eddie Kronenberger:** If you take a cellphone, keep it close to your body. It helps keep the battery warm. The battery may lose juice in the cold temperatures.

■ **Sierra Santia:** Be prepared! Bring extra snacks and water and bring an emergency blanket. Your body burns more calories in the cold, so don’t pick a longer trail

than your body can handle. I learned this the hard way after almost passing out on a trail one time in February.

■ **Sue Taylor:** Warmest hour of the day is around 4 p.m.; hike around that time if it’s bitterly cold. Swap out your water bottle for warm water in a Thermos to keep warm. I spent the big bucks on Merrell insulated boots this year – changed my world.

■ **Katie Thimons:** Whether I am trail running or hiking in cold temps, I layer around a vest. It keeps my arms from being too bulky and constricted without losing heat from my core and keeps me from getting too hot.

■ **Suzy Streamer White:** When its windy, hike in trees vs. meadows since it blocks wind. I also wear a rain outer layer as it keeps wind out and fleece on inner layer to stay warm. I always carry my compass and whistle, too.

Other hikers’ must-haves include hiking poles, cleats like Yaktrax and wool socks.