



Winter Activities 2019

Bundle up and prepare for great winter fun! Time outside with the family keeps everyone active, happy and healthy. Make some hot chocolate and some cool memories!

Schedule it in. If you add something to your calendar, such as sledding on the 24th, or hiking on Thursday and then tell the kids about it, you are bound to do that thing. They will not let you forget you promised to take them somewhere on a specific day. So let the kids in on the plan.

Invite friends. Ask friends to come outside, the kids can have fun playing with someone other than you and you can have fun socializing with another adult. It's a win-win!

Have an Activity in Mind. Go out with some idea of an activity, even if it's as simple as a brisk walk around the neighborhood. Play tag (try flashlight tag or freeze tag☺), throw the ball, play Frisbee, clean the walkway, chase the dog (he needs exercise too). Snow, of course, provides all sorts of automatic activities: sledding, snow angels, snow men, snow ball fights, and so on. Promising warm cookies and hot chocolate when you get back inside is a great way to motivate reluctant kids (and adults!).

When you get outside with your kids in the winter, you build their resilience, create family bonds and make great memories.



Activities

Make mini-snowmen out of snowballs. Younger children find making these little people easier than building the standard life-sized snowman. Get the neighborhood involved and create a whole city of mini-snowpeople!

Build a bigger snowball. Have you ever wondered what would happen if you didn't stop rolling that ball for the base of a snowman? Whenever it snows, roll some more to see how big the snowball can get over time. Bonus: take guesses on when it will finally melt away.

Scavenger hunt. Freeze colored water in ice cube trays or use glow sticks. Hide them outdoors.

Beyond snowmen. Expand snow-building to include such things as forts, cars, animals, or favorite sports team logos. Use water with food coloring to "paint" creations.



Take up stargazing. Winter is a great time to stargaze because cold, dry air is stiller than warm air, so visibility is improved in the winter. You may even spot one of the five planets that are

occasionally visible to the naked eye in our solar system: Mars, Venus, Jupiter, Saturn, and Mercury. Visit UNH Observatory, Spinney Lane, Durham. Free viewing sessions for the public every first and third Saturday of the month, year round. Starting time at either 8 PM or 9 PM, depending on the season. For more, visit physics.unh.edu/observatory



Freeze bubbles! If the outside weather is below 32 degrees, you can make bubbles outdoors. Blow a bubble and catch it on the wand. Wait and watch as it freezes. It will turn into a crystal ball and then shatter like glass; you'll see ice crystals form. You'll also notice the vibrant colors! It's a good idea to first chill the containers of bubble solution in the refrigerator.

Viewing snowflakes. You will need a viewing platform: black velvet, dark cloth, or black construction paper and Magnifying glass. You'll need to freeze your viewing surface (keep it in the fridge or outside in a cold dry area). If the snow is falling, just hold your platform aloft to catch a few flakes and view with your magnifying glass. You may need to wear a scarf over the mouth and nose to avoid melting the flakes with a warm breath.

Adapt summer backyard games for snow play. Frisbee, soccer, tag, hide and seek, follow the leader. Break out sand toys (buckets, scoops, and molds) for snow castles and other creations. Head to a playground.

S'mores? Roasted hot dogs? No need to wait for summer, there is a fire pit and warming hut at the Stratham Hill Park next to the ice rink.

Make you own snowshoes. Use heavyduty cardboard, punch holes, thread rope, and tie around boots. Scare your neighbors by making bear paws 😊.

Hiking, Snowshoeing, Cross-Country Skiing

College Woods – off Colovos Road at UNH, Durham. With 250 of acres of woods, streams, and fields.

Highland Farms - located on Route 91 in York, ME. It's fairly flat and families can choose a hike that suits them.
<https://yorklandtrust.org/explore/highland-farm-preserve> (207) 363-7400

Gonic Trails – at the Mt. Isinglass Rec area, Rochester Neck Rd in Gonic, adjacent to the Turnkey Landfill. There are two loop trails (1.5 miles each) and one out-and-back trail (3.5 miles each way) in the woods along the Isinglass River.

Oaklands Town Forest – access via Rte 85, Exeter, near the 101 ramps. The trail network includes a 5-mile loop trail with several offshoots.

Stratham Hill Park - Rt. 33 Stratham. Ten miles of groomed trails for hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing.

Urban Forestry Center - The 182-acre Urban Forestry Center offers a series of self-guided trails for walking, cross-country skiing, and snowshoeing. 45 Elwyn Road, Portsmouth.

Wagon Hill Farm –This town property is free and open to the public year round. Enjoy a large sledding hill on one side and walking and cross-country trails leading down to the Great Bay on the other. Great spot for picnicking and hot cocoa, too! Off Rt. 4, Durham.

Check out the Town of Durham's webpage for a list of outdoor activity sites.

<https://www.ci.durham.nh.us/recreation/outdoor-recreation-recommended-site-activities>

Sledding Hills



Alexander Carr Park – Derry, NH. Behind Parkland Medical Offices next to Parkland Hospital, off Birch St.

Bellamy Park – Dover, NH. Park next to soccer field.

Brown's Hill - just east of the Rt. 125 and Hedding Road intersection in Epping

Dearborn Park - Rte 111, No. Hampton, NH. Park at the bottom of the hill.

Garrison Hill Tower – Dover, NH. Off Central Avenue between Dover downtown and the "miracle mile" mall area. Turn right on Abbey Sawyer Road at sign just before the entrance to Wentworth-Douglass Hospital.

Parking is at the bottom of the hill, and the top if your car can make it. Very good spot if you want to go fast.

Harvey's Hill (a.k.a. Brown's Hill) – off Hedding Rd from Rte 125, Epping, NH. A former ski area, the hill on Harvey's Farm is now popular for sledding.

Jady Hill - Exeter Country Club, 58 Jady Hill Avenue, Exeter NH. Good for kids

Powderhouse Hill - Agamenticus Rd, So. Berwick, ME. The sledding hill next to Powderhouse Hill and is free.

Parking is a bit tough on weekends <http://www.powderhousehill.com/>

South Mill Pond – behind the tennis courts

Stratham Hill Park – Rte 33 in Stratham

Wagon Hill - Route 4, Durham, NH. Park in designated spots only.

York Golf Club on Organug Road in York, Maine

Ice Skating



Churchill Rink at Jackson's Landing, 9 Old Piscataqua Rd., Durham. Outdoor rink with rentals available. \$5-children 18 and under, \$7-adults, \$4-skate rental. <http://www.churchillrink.org/publicskating> 603-868-3907

Dixon Road Ice Rinks, Eliot, ME. Outdoor rink – free (no rentals available). The rinks are located behind the Police Station and next to the Town Hall. Access to the rinks is from Dixon Road. Parking for the ice rinks is not permitted at the Town Hall. Limited parking spaces are available next to the red barn on Dixon Road; additional parking at Eliot Elementary School. <http://www.eliotcsd.org/facilities/parks/icerinks.html>

Puddle Dock Pond, Strawberry Banke Museum, Portsmouth. Visit <http://puddledockpond.org/rink-info/> for rates and hours including free skate times. 603.422.0600

Somersworth Lions Club, 135 West High Street, Somersworth, NH. Outdoor rink – FREE. There are random size skates and hockey sticks/pucks available to use for free when snack shack is open. <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Somersworth-Lions-Club/203684439649821>

Stratham Hill Park Ice Skating Rink, 270 Portsmouth Ave, Stratham NH. Outdoor rink – free (no rentals available). The almost 1 acre surface has an area for playing ice hockey and another area for those just looking to skate. There is a fire ring and a warm hut at the end closest to the main parking lot. The rink has lights for night skating, the switch is in the warming hut.

Dover Ice Arena, 110 Portland Ave, Dover, NH (603)516-6000. Visit for rates and hours: <http://www.dover.nh.gov/government/city-operations/recreation/arena/public-skate/index.html>

The Rinks at Exeter, 40 Industrial Ave, Exeter, NH (603)775-7423. Visit for rates and hours: <http://www.therinksatexeter.com/skating-2/>

Whittmore Center Arena, 128 Main St., Durham NH. Visit for rates and hours: <http://www.whittcenter.com/>
Keep your eye out for the opportunity to skate with the players – free!

Calendar of Winter Events

First and third Fridays December –April, 4:30-6 Center for Wildlife's Owl Prowl Series. Introduces participants to the amazing adaptations of native owls. Learn about native owl species, their ecology, adaptations, and meet local representatives up close! Take a short walk into the surrounding habitat to call for owls and listen for whooo might call back. \$7 per person suggested donation. 385 Mountain Road, Cape Neddick, ME. 207.361.1400

January 1: New Hampshire's First Day Hikes 2019. Wentworth-Coolidge Mansion State Historic Site, join park staff for a self-guided natural history tour of the Little Harbor Loop Trail. The loop trail is considered an easy 1.5 mile hike that will take approximately 1-1.5 hours to hike. Guides will be present to share the natural history of the abutting Creek Farm Reservation. Seek signs of wildlife, watch shorebirds on the tidal flats, discover a tidal pool, and enjoy the many varieties of tree and plants that highlight Creek Farm as a unique coastal habitat. After the hike, enjoy a warm drink and snack inside the park's visitor center. Event begins at 12pm and ends at 3pm. 375 Little Harbor Road, Portsmouth Go to <http://wentworthcoolidge.org/> to register.

January 19: 9:30-11:30 Trek alongside expert naturalists from White Pine Programs and York Land Trust and learn how to find signs of wildlife in winter at YLT's Highland Farm Preserve. This is a family-friendly adventure for adults and kids (8-yrs./above) registration is required at 207 363-7400.
<https://whitepineprograms.org/events/winter-wildlife-tracking-for-the-family/>

**Whatever the season, move and play for at least 60 minutes a day.
Playing outside will make you feel great!**