



Feeling stuck this winter? Try these activities to get out of a rut!

Cabin fever is a very old term and something we are all too familiar with in Wyoming.

Wyoming's winters, with frigid temperatures, deep snow, and terrible winds, can definitely discourage people from going outside and causing cabin fever.

Luckily, there have been many advances in winter clothing technology. Specifically, new synthetic materials are available that help repel water, allow clothing to breath, and wick away moisture to keep outdoor seekers warm and dry. Even natural materials such as wool have been improved through textile advances so that many products are completely itch-free.

Comfort is the key to making the most of winter activities, especially for kids. Make taking kids outside

a fun and memorable experience rather than a dreaded winter torture. And no, you don't have to bundle them up like Randy in the movie "A Christmas Story"!

Going through a forest coated in thick blanket of snow, with all the trees glistening in the sunlight, is magical.

There are many ways to get out and enjoy the outdoors in the winter. Here are a few ideas to get started.

Skiing

Skiing is probably the most popular. While most people automatically think of downhill skiing, cross country skiing is gaining popularity. Cross country skiing can have a negative connotation because it sounds like a lot of work. In reality, it is a lot easier than one realizes

and can be very enjoyable and relaxing. There are many areas around the state that have groomed ski trails and are great places to learn.

Snowshoeing

Snowshoeing is another great way to get out into our national forests and other natural areas to enjoy the tranquility of a beautiful winter day. Snowshoe design has advanced significantly, making them lighter, smaller, and less cumbersome than days of old. They still take a little practice but after a few hours they are easy for most to use. Snowshoes can help access many areas that would take forever without them because of having to “post hole” through deep snow.

Birding

Bird watching or birding in the winter has become more popular as well. There are more birds around in winter than you realize. It can be a good season to see species that may not be around in summer. Audubon has quite a few chapters around the state, and they are more than happy to have you join or just give recommendations on locations to view birds. They host many activities such as their annual Christmas bird count.

Wildlife watching

Wildlife watching in general can be easier in winter. Many species of wildlife migrate to lower elevations in the winter, making them more accessible to view. Keep in mind to give them plenty of space as this is a critical time of year for them, and stress will impact their survival. View at a distance and make sure you are aware of any restrictions in the area.

Fishing

Fishing should not be ruled out. Ice fishing is a great option for anglers of all ages and abilities to get out and enjoy Wyoming’s outdoors. There are many lakes available for ice fishing. Safety on

the ice should be a prime consideration when ice fishing. For more information on places to ice fish and safety considerations, please visit the Wyoming Game and Fish Department website wgfd.wyo.gov or your local WGFD office.

Snowmobiling

Snowmobiling provides a great way to get around in winter. It allows you to get out and explore the same areas you recreate in the summer. Wyoming is one of the top destinations for snowmobilers and has hundreds of miles of groomed trails. If you don’t want to purchase one, there are many places you can rent them or go on a guided tour.

These are just a few ideas on how to get out in the wintertime. Make sure you are prepared when you do go out to enjoy one of these winter activities. Getting stuck out overnight in winter is a lot more dangerous than in summer. There is an abundance of information on the internet covering this. Winter preparedness and winter weather recommendations from the Extension Disaster Education Network can be found at bit.ly/winter-activity-prep.

Don’t let winter discourage you. Just get out and enjoy it. You may start to enjoy winter as much as all the other seasons in this great state of Wyoming. I know I do.

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