

# *Quick Winter Tips For Knees and Hips*

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**MOVEMENTWISE  
Winter 2008 Article**

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Winter is particularly hard on knees and hips. These bony areas are exposed to cold wind without much muscle or fat to cover them. The knees especially can be hit by cold wind from any angle because they are round. All our true joints contain a joint fluid inside a sealed capsule. This fluid nourishes the cartilage and provides lubrication. Similar to oil in an engine, joint fluid may not be as effective as temperatures drop. Also the muscles inserting around the knee and hip are less elastic and are more prone to strain when they are exposed to the cold.

## Tips:

- 1) Warmth is crucial especially if you do any walking or running out in the cold. ***Knee warmers are a must*** for people who walk, bike or run recreationally in the cold. Long coats that cover the hips and knees can help too.
- 2) ***When kneeling on cool or damp surfaces use foam kneeling pads.*** The first time I planted bulbs kneeling on damp cool earth, my knees ached like I never experienced before. Keep a thermal layer between you and the cold and damp.
- 3) ***Take a warm bath several nights a week, massaging your hips, thighs, knees and calves.*** Tight muscles will loosen nicely when massaged in warm water. Circulation will improve not only in muscles but also in the joints themselves. [Click here](#) to watch a film clip. Bath or Epsom salt are helpful. No time for a bath? Use a warmed "Bed Buddy" directly on your joint (a grain filled hot pack, heated in the microwave for 2.5 seconds, available at most drug stores).  
Rub in your favorite liniment.
- 4) ***After your bath and leg massage, stretch the calves, ankles, knees and hips.*** [Click here](#) to watch a film clip.
- 5) ***Wear your arch supports in boots!*** Many of us who wear looser fitting slip-on, zip-up, buckle-up or Velcro boots are not getting the benefit from a snug fit in the arch area. At the very least put your arch supports in your boots. Supported arches will support your knees. This is especially important if you are shoveling snow, which adds a load through your knees and feet.
- 6) ***Walk, don't run when crossing the street in the cold!*** I sound like a mother here but really, when it is cold and you run across the street you run the risk of pulling a knee muscle. I've done it. The kneecap jumps up quickly and can scrape inside the groove, causing patella-femoral knee pain that can last weeks.
- 7) ***Climb stairs mindfully.*** Follow the basic principle that your knee should be positioned directly over the foot (not to the inside) as you place your foot on the stair and as you straighten or bend the knee. Don't let the knees come towards each other. Watch your speed in the cold.
- 8) ***Sitting in the Cold?*** Keep your bottom, hips and knees protected and follow the principle of varying your knee angle to reduce the pressure between your kneecap and thighbone cartilage. Worn spots can develop in the cartilage when knees are in one position often or long. Don't sit or kneel for long periods with knees bent fully, it overstretches the discs (between the thigh bone and lower leg bone), making them more susceptible to tears.
- 9) ***Don't forget your joint improving supplements.*** Consult your nutritionist for your dosage of Vitamin D, Calcium, Glucosamine and Fish oil.
- 10) ***Finally stay well hydrated.*** Proper hydration keeps cartilage smooth and more friction resistant.