

# THE INDUSTRIAL ATHLETE DIGEST

Weekly Wellness & Safety Tips from Work Right NW



## THE COLD ACTUALLY DOES BOTHER ME ANYWAY

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Have you found it harder to perform certain tasks as simple as running or jumping in the cold weather compared to warm weather? As the temperature goes down, some people notice changes in their joints - like our fingers, shoulders, elbows, and knees. Yes, the cooler weather *does* have an effect on our joints. Let's take a look at why and what we can do about it.

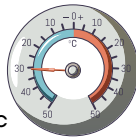
### CH-CH-CHANGES

Our joints contain a shock absorbing fluid called synovial fluid. This is a thick fluid like an egg white. It reduces friction between the joints during movement. However, in colder temperatures synovial fluid thickens, which impedes its ability to flow freely. As a result, the joints can become stiffer. With stiffer/tighter joints, our muscles have less range of motion causing more stress on them, which in turn can lead to pinched nerves.

Stiff/Tight Joint → Less Range of Motion → More Muscle Stress → Pinched Nerves

### UNDER PRESSURE

Essentially, **barometric pressure** is the weight of air around us. In warm weather, barometric pressure is high, while cold weather causes barometric pressure drops. When barometric pressure lowers, the tissues in your joint slightly swell, which can put more pressure on the nerves that control discomfort sensation.

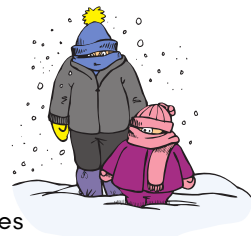


### NERVOUS

If you have or had a joint injury, cool/cold weather can cause discomfort in your joint. Scarring, inflammation, or adhesions can also **cause the nerves** to become hypersensitive in cold weather. This happens especially when there is a sudden temperature drop.

### SWEATER WEATHER

What can we do to prepare ourselves for colder weather? Have no fear! Keep this checklist handy:



- Proper warm-up before work:** It makes your joints warm up and increases blood flow to generate heat your own body heat.
- Stay hydrated:** People drink less water in colder weather. Dehydration never helps your health! Avoid caffeine (energy drinks and coffee) as it increases urine production. Caffeine also increases blood flow at the skin surface which can decrease the core body heat.
- Clothing:** Layers!! Wear appropriate warm clothing. Gloves, neck warmer, beanie, and compression sleeves for joints.
- Warm up breaks:** Have a hot drink during your break to boost your body temperature. Keep warm with stretches.
- Stay Active:** It's important to **stay active** to keep joints flexible and prevent joint pain. Keep active with daily stretches, walking, and workouts.
- Maintain a Healthy Balanced Diet:** When you are working in a cold environment, you're using extra energy because the body is working harder to keep itself warm. In addition, work clothing and boots are sometimes bulkier than general clothing. It requires more energy to move around. Eating a decent, balanced diet that contains protein, carbs, and natural fats and sugars helps fuel your body and maintain your performance.

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**Work Right NW** is changing the way that companies view workplace hazards. Our focus is on educating the workforce to prevent injury. We provide access to Injury Prevention Specialists in the workplace to address the early signs of discomfort. We are changing the industry one company at a time by helping one person at a time.

