

# THE INDIANAPOLIS STAR

## 5 ways to stay safe during winter sports

Winter is upon us, and with that comes snow, ice and winter sports.

"Winter can be a great time to get involved in some fun sports, but if you are one of the millions of people who will take to the ice and snow this season, pay attention to your body and prepare yourself for the sport," said Dr. Mark Ritter, an orthopedic surgeon at Methodist Sports Medicine/The Orthopedic Specialists.

According to the American Academy of Orthopedic Surgeons, snow-

boarding is the leading cause of winter sports injuries, affecting nearly 150,000 people. Next is skiing and snowmobiling.

For more information on how to stay safe during winter sports and activities, visit [www.mykneehurts.info](http://www.mykneehurts.info), [www.mybackhurts.info](http://www.mybackhurts.info), or [www.methodistsports.com](http://www.methodistsports.com).

Here are some of Ritter's tips:

**1 | WARM UP AND COOL DOWN:** Stretch for about 30 seconds or more and do some light exercise for



three to five minutes to warm up your muscles. This helps blood to flow to your back muscles and prepares your body for activity. A cooldown afterward reduces cramping and tightening.

**2 | GEAR UP PROPERLY:** It is important to wear the correct footwear, protective gear and layers to keep warm. Not only is proper gear important, but staying

warm is essential to prevent frostbite and keep muscles flexible.

**3 | DON'T IMITATE STUNTS:** Don't try any stunts you see on TV. Those are practiced moves that can cause untrained athletes to injure themselves.

**4 | NEVER PRACTICE ALONE:** Because extreme sports are just that, extreme, you should never practice alone in case of an injury.

**5 | USE GOOD TECHNIQUE:** Remember not to twist or jerk your body in a way that is uncomfortable. It's wise to take lessons from a trained professional to prevent back strain or injury.

— Barb Berggoetz