

# Tricks of the Trade

## Snow Fun!

Brrr...it's cold outside! Put on your hats, boots and mittens and gear up for some fun in the snow this month! We've collected a few ideas to keep the kids active in the snow. And, for those blustery days, we've tossed out a few ideas to have "snow fun" - inside!

### Activities

#### Outdoor Fun

##### Snow Sculptures

Use those leftover Christmas boxes as "molds" to make bricks for forts, towers, trains or any other sculpture!

##### Paint Snow!

Mix a few drops of food coloring with water in a spray bottle. Paint the snow outside.

##### Scavenger Hunt

Put any plastic toys out in the snow and have a scavenger hunt. The beach toys that are nearby in the garage work great for this. Learning colors or want to make it "even" for all ages? Assign one child a color.

##### Nature Walk

Put on your hats and mittens and enjoy the quiet stillness of winter. Hang up some home made bird feeders (see craft section).

##### Snow Golf

Set up a golf course in your yard. Add wacky obstacles such as a pool, toy rings or a hula hoop sunk halfway in the snow; a toboggan or skateboard upside down; a trash-can lid; a tunnel through the bottom of a snowman. And don't forget to make holes! Recycled plastic containers sink in the snow.

#### Too Cold For Outside?

##### July in January - Beach Day

Bring out the bathing suit, snorkels and fill up the bathtub with warm water. Toss in some cups and bubbles....ahh...can you remember your summer vacation?

##### Indoor Snowball Fight or Catch

Too cold to go out, but have energy? Try an indoor snowball fight or catch! Use rolled up socks, newspaper or Styrofoam balls in lieu of the real thing.

### Books to Read

**The Snowy Day** Ezra Jack Keats

**Dream Snow** Eric Carle

**The Mitten** Jan Brett

**The Snowman** Raymond Briggs

**That's Not My Snowman**

Fiona Watt and Rachel Wells

**Katy and the Big Snow** Virginia Lee Burton

**Snow Bugs: A Wintery Pop-up Book**

David A. Carter



### Quick Boredom Busters

#### Snow Melt Guess

Scoop snow in a clear cup. Guess the level of water the snow will melt to. Mark the level with tape or a marker. Depending on your child's interest level, take it another level by integrating a little science! Did the snow melt higher or lower than the "guess line"? How much time did it take? Did it melt faster in the garage or in the kitchen, etc?

#### Make Snowflakes

You remember.... fold, cut!

#### Reuse leftover boxes or wrapping paper tubes for crafts

Fill pie tins or wrapping paper tubes with packing peanuts and rice to make instruments. Tape bubble packaging to the top of boxes for drums. Make big boxes into forts, crawl through structures, kitchens, etc.

### Crafts

#### Shaving Cream Snowman or Snow Scene

**Supplies:** Shaving cream, Elmer's glue, blue paper (or any other color that contrasts with white), "decorations" such as buttons, glitter, sparkles, pom-poms, beads, etc.

**Directions:** Put shaving cream in a bowl and add some glue. Proportions are estimated: use approx. 3 proportions of shaving cream to one portion glue. Stir it around (when it dries it holds its shape). Draw snowman on paper. Spread mixture on paper with Popsicle sticks or use a spoon to make a snow scene, snowman etc. Place decorations on paper or in the snow (buttons on snowman, glitter in snow falling, etc.)

#### Bird Feeder with Peanut butter:

**Supplies:** Pinecones, peanut butter, birdseed, string

**Directions:** Tie string around pinecone, but leave ends open to tie around tree branch. Spread peanut butter. Roll in birdseed. Hang outside in a place the kids can easily see.

#### Sparkling Ice Crystals

**Supplies:** 12" white iridescent pipe cleaners, clear tri or sunburst beads, needle and fishing line, white iridescent pom-poms

**Directions:** Cut 6 pipe cleaners in half to create 12 pieces. Hold 11 pieces together and tightly wrap the last piece around the middle of the bundle, twisting its ends to secure it. Spread the pipe cleaner pieces into a starburst shape and thread about 5 beads onto each pipe cleaner half. Using the needle, thread the pom-poms on the fishing line, then tie the snowflake to one end of the line.

### Gibbles and Nibbles

Welcome winter!!! Here are some easy and fun kid friendly recipes to help get you through these cold months. We have also included an article on easy ways to eat healthier in the New Year! Happy New Year everyone!

#### Easy Snowman Snack

**Ingredients:** Large marshmallows, Pretzel sticks, Raisins

**Directions:** Give each child 2 marshmallows, 3 pretzel sticks and a few raisins. Have them take a pretzel stick and put it into the middle of one of the marshmallows, then place the other marshmallow on top. Take the other two pretzels and use them for the arms. Use the raisins for eyes, nose, and mouth. Enjoy!

#### Hershey's Hot Cocoa (6 servings)

**Ingredients:** 1/2 C. sugar, 1/4 cup Hershey's cocoa, dash salt, 1/3 C. hot water, 4 C. (1 qt.) milk, About 1 C. cold milk, 3/4 tsp. vanilla

**Directions:** In medium saucepan, stir together sugar, cocoa and salt; stir in water. Cook over medium heat, stirring constantly, until mixture boil. Boil and stir 2 minutes. Add milk (stirring constantly) and heat to serving temperature. Do Not Boil. Remove from heat and add vanilla. Beat with whisk until foamy.

**For variations add any of the following with the vanilla extract...**

**Cinnamon cocoa:** Add 1/4 to 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon.

**Mint cocoa:** 1/2 Teaspoon mint extract or 3 tablespoons crushed hard peppermint candy.

**Mocha cocoa:** 1-2 tablespoons instant coffee.

#### Doughnut Snowmen

**Ingredients:** Small powdered doughnut, Powdered doughnut hole, Decorators' gel, Pretzel or potato stick, Haviland Thin Mint, Reese's peanut butter cup miniature

**Directions:** Set a powdered doughnut hole atop a mini powdered doughnut. (For a taller version, use a pretzel stick or a potato stick to secure a second doughnut hole atop the first.) Use decorators' gel to add a face, buttons, and a carrot nose. (If the gel won't stick, try smoothing the powder with a dab of water first.) To add a top hat to a shorter snowman, stick a small piece of a pretzel or potato stick through a Haviland Thin Mint and into a Reese's peanut butter cup miniature, then secure the hat in place on the snowman.

#### Snowman on a Stick

**Ingredients:** Bananas, Grapes, Carrot, Apple, Bamboo skewers Mini chocolate chips, Pretzel sticks

**Directions:** For each snowman, you will need three thick slices of banana, a grape, a sliver of carrot, and a triangular piece of apple. (Tip: Poke a hole in the apple piece with a bamboo skewer first to make assembly easier.) Have your kids slide the fruit onto the skewer, then use the carrot slivers for noses, mini chocolate chips for eyes and buttons, and pretzel sticks for arms.

### 5 Simple Steps to a Healthier You!

Sofia Layarda, MPH, RD

Here are our top 5 picks for simple steps that you can start doing right now, and always, on the road to a healthier you.

#### 1. Bring one piece of fruit to work or school.

Many of us could stand to add one (or more) servings of fruit to our diets each day. Fortunately, it is the easiest thing to get ready - no cooking required. Pack a piece of fruit to eat with your lunch, or to have as a snack. If you feel you don't have the time to peel or cut whole fruits, many stores now offer pre-cut ones to go. Remember, go with the option that will result in you actually eating the fruit. A ripe, juicy melon that sits uncut and grows moldy in your fridge does nothing good for your health, or your wallet.

#### 2. Replace one of your favorite grain products with its whole wheat version.

If you bake frequently, replace some of the white flour in your muffin or bread recipes with whole wheat flour. You can usually substitute anywhere from one-third to one-half of the flour with no noticeable difference in the end product. And don't turn your nose up at whole wheat pastas - today's whole wheat versions have come a long way and taste just as great as regular "white" pastas. There is also a growing number of whole wheat Asian-style noodles on the market.

#### 3. Try a do-it-yourself meal instead of a take-out meal.

If you eat out frequently, choose one night a week (the least busy night) to make something at home. Not a cook? No problem. There are so many products available now that help you shortcut your way to a home-cooked meal without spending hours in the kitchen. One more thing: when cooking for yourself, make extra so you have leftovers to freeze or pack as lunch for work or school the next day.

#### 4. No more sodas, whether they are regular or diet.

If you drink several cans a day, start by drinking one fewer can each day. Regular soda fills you with sugar, and nothing else. Diet soda is no better; some studies suggest that diet soda drinkers have a higher risk of obesity and other health problems. Skip the sodas and reach for a calcium-rich beverage like milk, or other fortified non-dairy alternatives like soy milk and orange juice. When you feel like something a little sweet, brew up some tea and add a little fruit juice to it for your very own homemade iced tea. Carry a water bottle with you and sip from it throughout the day.

#### 5. Feed yourself within two hours of waking up.

Eating breakfast regularly will set you up for better food choices during the rest of the day. If you are not a breakfast eater, start with something simple like a piece of fruit. If you eat breakfast regularly but are getting tired of the same old things, experiment and don't let the traditional definition of breakfast limit your choices. Leftovers from last night's dinner make a perfectly good breakfast the next day.

#### The Bottom Line

Why wait to get started? Start living your New Year's resolutions by incorporating these simple strategies into your family routine today.