

break your cabin fever

Getting out and active despite the freeze

It may be tempting to let the icy Windy City chill and short winter days keep you inside enjoying cozy indoor activities, but don't forget about the fun that can be had in the great outdoors. Chicagoans have many options for staying active and staving off cabin fever in these frosty months.

Snow sculpting

Randhurst Mall

Professional snow sculpting teams from across the world, as well as local high school students, will compete in the Chicago Snow Sculpting Competition. Previous years' designs for the striking 10-foot tall snow statues have included an oversized mermaid and a giant gorilla. Feb 8-10. Free.

999 N. Elmhurst Road, Mount Prospect,
(847) 427-0703, snowvisions.com

Horse-drawn carriage rides

Several carriage companies have been treating Chicagoans to old-fashioned tours of the city for decades. Grab an impulsive ride from the stately white carriages that orbit around Michigan Avenue, or plan ahead for a special event. Bundle up, snuggle up and bring a thermos of hot chocolate for maximum enjoyment.

antiquecoach-carriage.com
chicagocarriage.com
goldcoastcarriages.com

Soak in the views

The Adler Planetarium's eatery, Galileo's Cafe, is a great place to sit and enjoy the view of the lake and skyline on a sunny winter day. The cafe is nestled under the building's interesting angled steel and glass roof. No need to pay museum admission fee to get in.

1300 S. Lake Shore Drive, (312) 922-7827,
adlerplanetarium.org



Winter walking

Lincoln Park Zoo

Sure, winter mornings can be a little chilly, but that doesn't mean your only exercise option is the treadmill at home. The Chicago Walkers Club is out hoofing Chicago sidewalks and trails all year long. The organization holds competitions, training and fun walks, plus 9 am fitness walks every Saturday, "rain, snow or shine."

Cannon Drive south of Fullerton Parkway,
East entrance, chicagowalkers.org

Ice fishing and snow fun

Ned Brown Forest Preserve

Ice fishing is permitted on designated lakes strictly on a "fish at your own risk" basis, as ice conditions are not monitored. It's up to you to make sure at least four inches of solid ice cover the lake before sliding across it with bait and tackle. You could come home with a bucket of channel catfish, white crappie, bluegill or largemouth bass. Busse Lake is active with ice fishing as well as ice skating, cross-country skiing and snowmobiling.

Elk Grove, (708) 771-1330, fpdccc.com

Ice skating

McFetridge Sports Center

Ditto for ice skating on Park District and Forest Preserve lakes — it's "skate at your own risk," and it's only permitted on six lakes. However, McFetridge Sports Center offers icy fun throughout the year, including ice hockey clinics and team play, various levels of figure skating lessons and a general public skate.

3843 N. California Ave., (773) 478-2609,
chicagoparkdistrict.com

Swimming

Lake Michigan

For the exceptionally brave (or foolhardy), Lakeview Polar Bear Club schedules a few frozen dips into Lake Michigan each year and tend to turn the events into fundraisers for various charities. But don't worry, it's a brief thrill — most wintertime swimmers only jump in for a few exhilarating minutes before running back to shore for dry clothes and warm beverages.

lakeviewpolarbearclub.com