



WINTER  
RECREATION

# Go bowling

**W**inter is a great time to have some fun outdoors, but if it's too cold, find some indoor fun.

If you're looking to shake things up and stay warm in the process, head out to the local bowling alley with some friends to throw a few frames.

Census data shows there are 4,061 bowling centers in the United States as of 2012 — so it stands to reason there's one relatively nearby, no matter where you live.

## IT'S FUN (AND HEALTHY)

Though not the most obvious exercise activity, bowling has been shown to burn calories and serve as an anaerobic workout like a combination of walking and working with free weights. The game works everything from arm muscles to tendons and ligaments — and can also be a whole lot of fun.

Though bowling itself can be fun, the game is a whole lot more enjoyable if you're actually good at it.

The United States Bowling Congress recommends the following tips for bowlers:

## RELAX AND KEEP THE FIRST STEP SHORT

To start out on the right foot, take a deep breath and calm down before bowling. As you approach the line, keep your first step short, then add some distance with each additional step. A four or five step approach is recommended, and your ball-side foot should step forward as your arm with the ball moves out in a rounded motion. At the end of the first step, the ball should be about 4 to 6 inches in front of the ball-side foot ready to fall into the back swing. In a five-step approach, your short first step is with your non-ball-side foot. Your second step with your ball-side foot then imitates the four-step approach example above.

## TAKE A RELAXED SWING

Get into a comfortable stance holding the ball about waist high. Move your ball-side foot back more than usual to have additional balance. Squeeze the ball as hard as possible and hold it for 7-10 seconds. Imagine ball's path as a line drawn on the lane surface. In your stance, visualize a line beginning at the release line extending through your target on the lane. To make this stand out in your mind, make that line your favorite color. Picture the line, relax and roll the ball down that path.



# Catch a movie

If you're tired of having fun in the cold this winter, you can always head inside to a local theater to keep warm and take a break.

From PG-rated, kid friendly fare such as Pixar's "The Good Dinosaur" to tent pole events such as "Star Wars: The Force Awakens," this winter brings a ton of great options guaranteed to keep you entertained.

There are thousands of theaters in the U.S., and with average ticket prices hovering just above \$8, the cineplex remains an affordable option for a fun night (or day) out.

## MAKE SURE YOU KNOW WHAT YOU'RE WATCHING

Hundreds (and hundreds) of movies open every year, and sometimes the 30-second trailer you see on TV might not be the most accurate description for what you'll find after settling in for a two-hour film.

Do a little research. Pull up a full-length trailer online and check it out, then make sure to check out the film's rating so there won't be any surprises (especially if bringing younger children or teens).

Movies rated "G" are approved for general audiences and shouldn't include anything that would offend children. Movies rated "PG" are recommended with parental guidance, as it may contain material not suitable for young children. Movies



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rated PG-13 are recommended for viewers over the age of 13, as some material is likely not suitable for youngsters. Movies rated "R" will contain adult material such as violence or nudity. Movies rated NC-17 are films intended

only for adults and no children will be admitted.

## KNOW THE ETIQUETTE

There's nothing more annoying than someone with a cell phone on maximum brightness or a group talking

loudly, so follow some basic etiquette once the lights go dark. If you absolutely need to check your phone, turn the brightness down as far as possible and conceal it from those around you. Even better, step outside or to the side

of the theatre to check the message. Also, keep quiet once the movie begins. Everyone enjoys talking to their friends, but no one wants to hear your dinner plans in the middle of the third act.

# Join a gym, get in shape

**W**hen it's too cold for most typical outdoor activities, it could be the perfect time to join a local gym to stay active during the winter months.

Many gyms run winter specials for membership drives, and depending on what type of gym you join, it could offer up some nice (warm) activities to keep you active. Plus, if you pick the right gym, you could even get some bonus features to help keep you entertained until the spring.

## MAKE THE RIGHT CHOICE

It might seem obvious, but do some research before signing up for six months or a year. Find out what the gym offers, pricing and any special perks for members. Many chains offer access to any of the gym's locations across the country, so if you travel for work, you can still plan your workout and check out a different facility in a new city for no extra fee. Plus, many gyms offer classes such as yoga, spin and aerobics for members at a discounted rate or free. Also be sure to know all the physical amenities available. Some gyms might include indoor and outdoor pools for members (many of which are sometimes rarely used) that could make for a nice, warm swim on a cold day.

## GET FIT

With many holidays falling in the fall and winter months, it's easy to slack off on the fitness regimen and add a few extra pounds around the holidays. A gym membership can easily help combat that urge.

It might be too cold to take off down the sidewalk for an evening run, but there are always warm and toasty treadmills and weight benches available at the gym. Getting in shape in the summer, then letting it all lapse in the winter, makes it harder with each passing year to get back in shape. Stop taking the winter break, and you'll never have the pain and soreness of starting over.



# Plan a night in

**S**ure, it might seem a bit like giving up to put on some comfy clothes and crank up the heat — but there's nothing wrong with enjoying a night in once the temperature starts dropping.

If you choose to kick back and take a break from the outside world, there are a few good options for doing it right.

## RENT OR STREAM A MOVIE

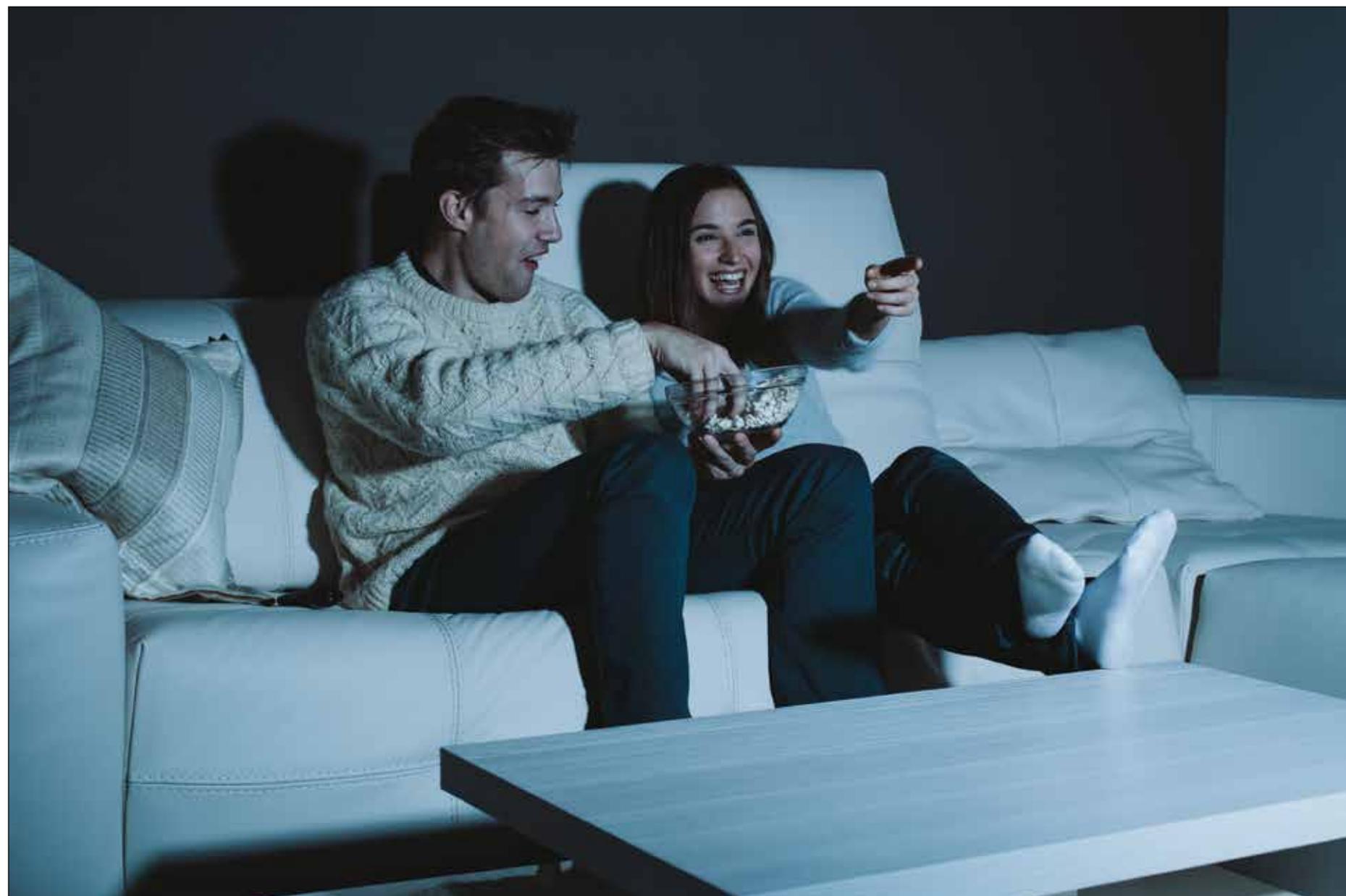
There's a reason video stores are folding left and right — streaming services such as Netflix and Amazon Prime are extremely convenient, and millions of people are taking advantage. It's a sea change that is making the corner video store a rarity, but that doesn't mean the corner shop (if there still is one) has lost its charm. Before your night out, make a stop by the local video store to grab a movie.

Nothing beats that tangible feeling of actually strolling the aisles, and the video store isn't beholden to the tricky film rights deals that often hamstring offerings available for streaming.

If there's no video store available, there's nothing wrong with picking out a good film or TV show from the vast streaming libraries.

## READ A BOOK OR PUT ON A GOOD ALBUM

A warm night in is the perfect time to catch up on some reading, either by digging a classic off the shelf or picking up something new to explore



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from the book store. Again, this takes a bit of planning, so make sure you have a good book ready to go. If all else fails, there are always ebooks available at the click of a button. Just make sure you have

an ereader that is easy on the eyes and won't cause any strain.

A warm night in also can be the perfect time to dig into the record collection and put on an old favorite, or absorb a

new album.

## HAVE DINNER DELIVERED

Many restaurants deliver in larger metro areas, and some actually do in smaller areas. (Pizza is almost always a safe

bet).

Worst case scenario, call in your favorite dish at a local restaurant and pick it up. If all goes well, this should be the only trip needed to the outside world.

# Get creative with snow

**T**here's nothing quite like bundling up and heading outside into the snow. Cold weather is one thing, but a winter wonderland is quite another. If you're lucky enough to get a good snow, try a few outside-the-box activities.

Though activities such as skiing and snowboard are the obvious options, there are plenty of other fun things to do in the snow.

## SNOWBALL FIGHT

It doesn't cost a thing, and it's probably the most fun you can have on a snowy afternoon. When the snow settles in, most neighborhoods fill up with kids (and adults) looking to have a little fun. So head out and start a battle with your kids, significant other — or even the neighbors. But, whatever you do, get as many people as possible involved.

## GO SLEDDING WITH WHATEVER YOU CAN FIND

Though a real sled is ideal, you can still hit the local slopes with a few other household items. Even if you don't have a sled, just grab anything from a plastic tote lid to a garbage can lid and load up. Then, find the biggest hill in town and start climbing. Typically, you'll know you've found the right hill when you see other people sledding down.

## MOVE BEYOND THE BORING, OLD SNOWMAN

It seems like everyone has a childhood memory of building a snowman, complete with coal for eyes and a carrot for a nose. So, why not get a little more creative? It takes a bit more time, but snow can be molded into just about anything. Try making your own Snoopy on a dog house, full-size person, or a snow castle complete with moat. If you really want to push the envelope, get some square, plastic containers and build your own life-size igloo. Use the containers to make bricks. Then start laying it all out.



# Find some local fun

**W**inter is a great time to do a little research into your local community and figure out some of the more unique and quirky things it might have to offer.

It's amazing the interesting things that could be right under your nose. All you have to do is look.

## HIT UP A LOCAL MUSEUM

Not every city has its own Metropolitan Museum of Art, but most towns or counties have their own local museums. Some metro and state museums can have surprisingly solid art collections, and even getting down to the local level, small-town museums offer amazing history and insight into your local community.

The best part? Many museums are free to visit, or ask for a small donation. They also typically have heat.

## CATCH A CLASSIC FILM

Though the big-budget flicks at the local cineplex might get most of the attention, some towns or cities offer indie theaters or have libraries or art groups that offer screenings of classic or indie films. These screenings aren't always free, but they're usually relatively cheap. It's a great way to do something unique, stay warm and expand your creative horizons.

## SEEK OUT LIVE MUSIC

The biggies are the most obvious, as most communities

are within driving distance of concert halls or smaller venues for indie acts. Digging a bit deeper, many towns have coffee shops or restaurants that host local acts. Obviously, your mileage may vary in

regards to quality, but even the open mic night at the local coffee shop can hold some real surprises. Plus, there's nothing quite like kicking back and absorbing some live tunes.

## HEAD DOWNTOWN FOR SHOPPING

Though they're a bit more endangered than they used to be, many downtowns still offer vibrant shopping areas with niche boutiques or antique

shops. Sure, you have to brave the weather between stores, but shopping local and trying out stores you may have never visited is a great way to support, and explore, your hometown.



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# Learn something new

It's hard to combat the temptation to kick back and take it easy during the winter, but if utilized correctly, those cold months could give you time to learn a nifty new skill that could come in handy once things warm up.

Check around and consider anything from learning how to cook a new dish to putting brush to canvas for your first-ever painting. You could learn a skill that can carry on for years to come.

Local community colleges, art groups, chef's collectives and YMCAs offer dozens of different courses in the winter. Find something that piques your interest, and dig in.

## TAKE A COOKING CLASS

Even if you don't have a natural knack for putting together something delicious in the kitchen, a cooking class can still be a lot of fun. From learning the basics to higher-level courses, the ability to cook is one that will always come in handy down the line.

If actually leaving the house is too much to ask on a chilly afternoon, there are even new subscription services such as Blue Apron and Hello Fresh that will make all the measurements and do all the shopping for you — and ship a ready-to-cool box of fresh, high-quality food to your door. All you have to do is follow the instructions and put it together.

## DABBLE IN THE ARTS

Many local art shops and artist collectives have started offering entry-level painting courses for adults. Many also have adopted the “Sips 'n Strokes” model of offering up wine and a painting class, which ends with everyone taking home a canvas of their very own creation. Typically, the directions are fairly easy to follow, and everyone leaves with something worth hanging on the wall. If you're looking for something more practical, there also are classes that offer skills such as pottery and stained glass.

## GET SERIOUS

If you're really looking to take advantage of the winter months to do something truly productive, you're never too old to go back to college. Finish up a long-delayed degree, or start slowly chipping away at a new degree or certification. There's never a bad time to start.

