

# 20 Of Our Best Winter Life Hacks To Get You Through Winter

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**It's our mission to help make your life easier so we compiled a list of 20 of our very best tips and advice to get you through the toughest (and longest) season of the year.**

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by [Farmers' Almanac Staff](#) Updated: October 17, 2023



Winter is a tough time of year for many. The days are long and cold. Weather extremes can not only strike at a moment's notice, but they can bring treacherous and dangerous conditions. However, the *Farmers' Almanac* is here to help make your life easier. We have compiled a list of 20 winter life hacks and advice to assist you in navigating through this challenging and lengthy season.

## MY LATEST VIDEOS

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[See our Extended Forecast to see what we're predicting for winter weather!](#)

## 20 Best Winter Life Hacks

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### 1. Socks on the Go!

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Pack an extra pair of socks in your car's glove compartment. Then if you need to get out and shovel, or if you step into a puddle, you'll have dry socks to change into. And put those orphaned or mismatched socks to use: use them as wiper blade covers! This life hack for winter is simple yet so effective!

### 2. Keep a Bag of Clay Kitty Litter in Your Trunk

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If your car gets stuck in deep snow or slick ice, you can improve traction and get moving again by sprinkling non-clumping kitty litter at the base of your tires. To further increase traction, adding some extra weight in your trunk will ensure better contact between your tread and the ground.

### 3. Use a Fertilizer Spreader

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Fill your fertilizer spreader with sand and carefully walk over the areas where you want the sand to be spread. This method works effectively on icy walkways.

### 4. Clogged Snowblower Hack

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This winter hack is one of our favorites. Simply apply cooking spray, such as Pam®, to the snow blower's clean and dry auger and inside the discharge chute before tackling the snowdrifts. Additionally, you can use the cooking spray on your shovel to prevent snow from sticking.

## 5. Skip The Smoke and Coffee Before Shoveling

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Caffeine and nicotine are stimulants and can add extra stress to the heart. [More shoveling safety tips here.](#)

## 6. Prevent Food Spoilage In A Power Outage

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If you lose power from a winter storm, don't let food spoil in the fridge. While it will be safe for about 24 hours, pack it in coolers and move it outdoors (provided it's 30 degrees F or colder) if your outage is any longer than that. Use the charcoal grill to cook up anything that won't last.

## 7. Learn To Walk Like a Penguin

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## WINTER LESSONS: HOW TO WALK ON ICE



WRONG WAY

RIGHT WAY

**FACT:** On April 8, 2003, Dr. Robert Atkins, inventor of the famed Atkins Diet, slipped on icy pavement and suffered severe head trauma. He died nine days later.



**FACT:** Approximately 60 people die each year in the United States as a result of slipping on the ice. This is about as many as will die from a tornado.



This information brought to you by



If there's one life hack for winter you should practice, this is it! Learn to walk safely on ice, walk like a penguin. Point your feet out, and hold your arms out slightly to your side. Shuffle, and take short steps (*see video below!*).

## 8. De-Ice With A Potato



On the night before freezing temperatures, rub half a potato over your car's windshield. The sugar from the potato creates a barrier on the window, preventing ice formation. In the morning, you won't have to scrape! Simply rinse and use your wipers to clear the windshield when you hit the road. [You can also try these methods!](#)

## 9. Gas up!

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During cold weather months, it's a good practice to keep at least a half a tank of gasoline in your vehicle at all times. Not only does it prevent you from being stranded, but it prevents any water in the tank from freezing, which can damage the fuel pump.

## **10. Keep Side Mirrors Frost-Free**

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This car winter hack will save you time! Place plastic bags over your car mirrors at night and they'll be frost-free in the morning. Reuse them over and over.

## **11. Get Instant Traction With Your Car's Floor Mats**

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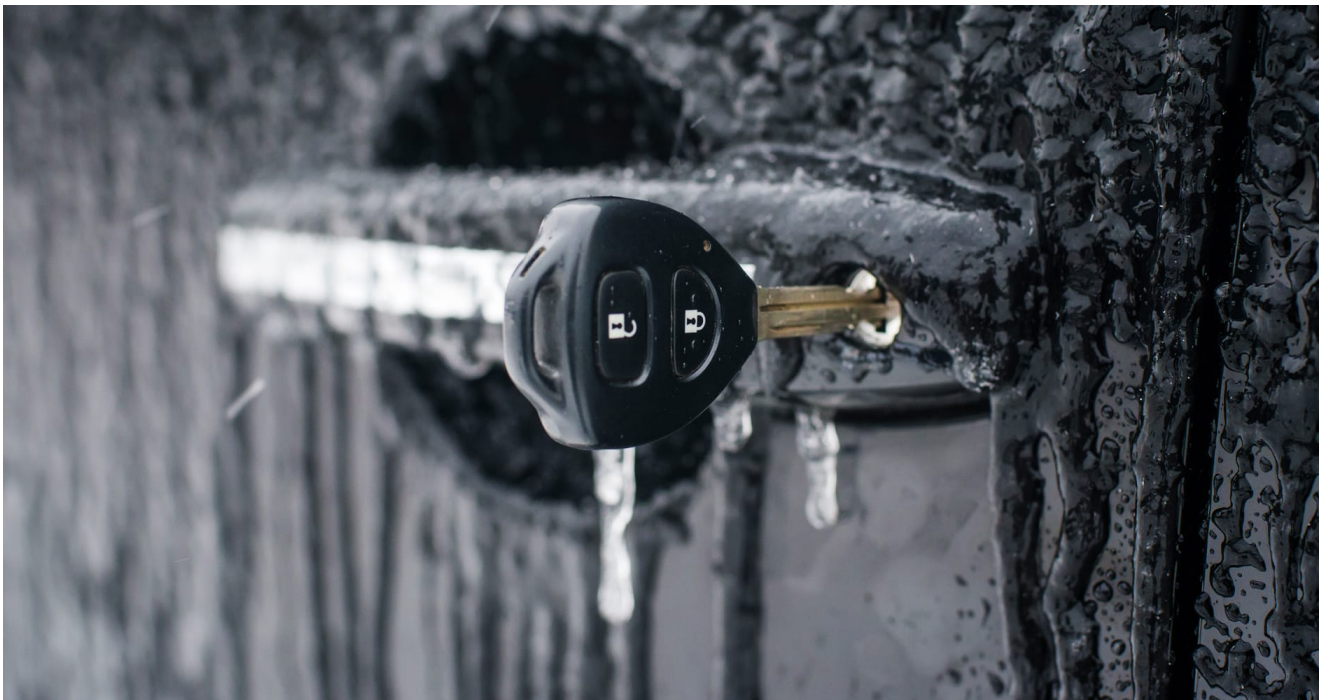


Your car's mats can help you get un-stuck!

Your car's floor mats can help you get un-stuck from snowy or muddy conditions in a pinch. Place your front floor mats under the spinning tire to give you some traction. Just don't forget to retrieve them after you get moving!

## 12. Unfreeze Locks With Hand Sanitizer

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When winter brings freezing rain, this life hack will save your day! Squirt a little hand sanitizer on them. The isopropyl alcohol that kills germs also lowers the freezing point of water, and can melt the ice inside the lock within seconds.

### 13. Save Your Skin

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Skip the long, hot showers, which can dry out skin. Try taking a lukewarm shower, for a shorter duration. And [try these home remedies to combat dry skin.](#)

### 14. Easy Ice Scraper

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A plastic card, such as an old gift card or loyalty card, from your wallet, works in a pinch. (Don't use credit cards as you can damage them).

### **15. Keep A Roll of Duct Tape In The Car**

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Not only does it fix everything, but you can use it as a fire starter – duct tape is very flammable and is a great tool to get a fire going in an emergency.

### **16. De-Ice Walkways With Used Coffee Grounds**

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Sprinkle leftover coffee grounds on your freshly shoveled walk or driveway to help melt the ice—it's a natural and environmentally friendly way to add more traction underfoot. Just wipe your feet as usual before entering the house.

## **17. Keep Pipes From Freezing**

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wrap them in insulation or layers of newspaper, covering the newspaper with plastic to keep out moisture.

## **18. Park Your Car Facing The Sun**

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Harness the power of the sun by parking so your car faces the sun (facing east or south). This way icy windshields will heat up quicker and help melt light frosts even during a cold winter morning. During the day, the sun will help keep your car just a little bit warmer.

## **19. Close Your Fireplace Flue**

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Fireplaces are a great way to heat up your home. However, when they aren't in use, it's best to close the flue so cool air doesn't draft in. (Just be sure to open it again when you light a fire.) Some fireplaces now have an automatic damper, so be sure to check yours.

## **20. Homemade Winter Windshield Washer Fluid**

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Did you know that high proof vodka or alcohol doesn't freeze? Add 8 ounces of the alcohol, an ounce of Castile liquid soap, with enough water to fill a clean 1-gallon container and shake to mix. Add directly to your car's wiper fluid reservoir.

## **VIDEO: Learn To Walk Like A Penguin**

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### **Related:**

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[How to prepare your home for cold winter temperatures](#)

Hygge – How practicing hygge can help keep winter blues away.

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Your ceiling fan is supposed to be set to blow down in the summer, and up in the winter, so it disperses the heat radially across the ceiling, while drawing cool air up. They mis-stated this above.

To be specific ... Counter clockwise in hot months/Clockwise in cold months.

when will the last frost occur in the Dallas area this spring?

When expecting snow or freezing weather and I know I will be leaving before sunrise I do this to avoid having to use an ice scraper on the glass: Takes only minutes to prepare if you keep it in your trunk or backseat area.

I use a sheet of plastic that is laid over the windshield and held on by either a set of magnets along the top and sides of the windshield or the ends of the plastic are trapped inside the closing door on each side. The plastic can be made using a split garbage bag or a sheet from a poly roll you buy.

Use a small wooden or plastic block under your wipers arm to keep them just clear of the glass or the plastic used to cover the glass. They won't be stuck to the glass anymore and the blocks hold the plastic down at the bottom to keep the wind out.

When going out in the morning, start your car and turn on the defroster(s) to avoid condensation or fogging when you get in. Remove the plastic and be on your way. Works on the back glass also, depending on the model of the car you drive. Keep in your car for the next time.

Hint no 2. To keep your battery from dying overnight, put an old jacket or blanket over it under the hood. Make sure you remove it before driving off. It stops the freezing cold from getting to the battery which in turn makes it last longer. Takes only seconds to put in or remove. I learned this when in Germany, and never had a dead battery in winter.

Excellent Richard, thanks for sharing!

I love all of these great tips, but I especially love the "Walk like a Penguin" I hope I remember to use this technique the next time I have to walk on ice.

I like the socks too....haha Great tips, luckily i am not working anymore so i get to sit inside and watch the bad weather. If i do go out I have transportation that picks me up and brings me home, you cant beat front door pickup and deliver. But i wrote a few down to tell my son.... thank you. Be careful everyone and keep warm.

I keep cracked corn in the care. Works wonders if stuck on ice. And the birds clean it up.

In response to those questioning the ceiling fan: fans blow directly down in summer more for aiding evaporation on your skin, thereby cooling you. The air current also can push air conditioned cool air from the floor level upward, stirring it up , if you will. In winter, slow it down in reverse. This pulls cooler air from the floor to push the warm air at the ceiling outward and down the walls to your level. Obviously, it is less effective on lower ceilings because there is less stratification to feel a difference. It's the same reason heat registers are, or should be, located on exterior walls when possible; cooler air on exterior walls aids in mixing the different temperature pockets.

To be specific ... Counter clockwise in hot months/Clockwise in cold months.

Put a towel on your windshield in the evening. This prevents ice from forming on the glass overnight. Remove the towel in the morning and Voila, its ice-free.

Michael ,

Hot air rises. Why would you move your warm air toward the ceiling in the winter and blow it down on you in the summer? Just asking. Alfalfa is \$15 a pound. That's kinda exspesive for side walk traction. Sand is fine if you get it without the salt just wipe your feet. Janice there are hundreds of sock patterns on line both from the toe up ones to the toe down. I've done both and the cable stitch. Each has advantages.

To be specific ... Counter clockwise in hot months/Clockwise in cold months.

Your windshield wipers will pivot away from your windshield if you do this before ice and snow your wipers will not freeze to the windshield. Also if you are not going to use your car for an extended period of time in the summer do this and it will extend the life of your wipers blades.

regarding #19 – alfalfa meal..... according to our local feed and grain store, the only form of alfalfa meal is rabbit food, available in pellets only. Although it does the job – it leaves sticky greenish 'stuff' on shoes. This dries on floors and carpets (car) as a suspicious brown! I ordered something else!

I leave my ceiling fans blowing down all year. Too many hot flashes! It still does a good job of circulating the air.

Hey Carol ever try the homeopathic hgh gel for your hot flashes?

The sock idea has another use too. Icy street or walkways? use socks over shoes. At least for awhile the sock fibers will grip icy surface and help get you to the door without slipping. As they get saturated the effect wears off but if the distance is not too far it really works. I have been saved by this trick several times and avoided landing on my bum. Best to use thicker winter sock with more fibers to catch on ice. If they don't fit over the type of shoe just carry the shoes and walk in socks. Keep a couple old pairs on hand in car especially when winter is coming!

If you don't want any of the above problems. Move to south Texas. Very little snow or ice ever.

# 2. Ceiling fans blow up in the winter and down in the summer. Just saying.

One must manually switch. To be specific ... Counter clockwise in hot months/Clockwise in cold months.

De-icer for #11: No need to make an alcohol mix. Fill the spray bottle with the same blue windshield wiper fluid you use for the car. Label the bottle with a marker with what is in it.

I am not leaving a comment, but have a question. I am a knitter who loves knitting socks, but have never seen the pattern on the orange socks you have pictured in the section of winter tips. Do you have any idea where they came from and the name of the pattern? Any help would be greatly appreciated!! Thank you !

Hi Janice, unfortunately no. That's just a stock image. But don't they look cozy!!!

I buy water softener salt in 40LB bags and put the bags in my trunk or behind the wheel wells in my truck. You can use the salt behind and under the tires if you get stuck or to deice your side walks and if you don't use it all, put it in your water softener. It's also cheaper than buying winter side walk deicer.

Thank you, Bernard, great tip!



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