

WINTER HIKING WITH DOGS

a practical checklist

BEFORE YOU GO:

Check the Conditions

- Temperature, precipitation, and windchill
- Recent weather (snow, ice, freezing rain)
- Trail exposure (shade, elevation, windy areas)
- Daylight hours (winter days get dark fast)

Consider Your Dog

- Age (young vs senior needs)
- Coat type & body fat
- Health or mobility concerns
- Energy levels *today* (not last month)

Pack the Essentials

- Harness or collar + standard leash
- Water + collapsible bowl
- Jacket (for single-coated or senior dogs)
- Paw protection (booties or paw balm)
- Post-hike snack (optional)
- Towel/blanket for the car

ON THE TRAIL:

Offer Water Regularly

- Even if your dog isn't asking

Watch Footing

- Icy patches or frozen streams
- Slippery rocks or leaves

Adjust As Needed

- Shorten the hike
- Take more breaks
- Turn around early if something feels off

Watch Your Dog

- Shivering
- Slowing Down
- Stiffness
- Sudden slowing or sitting
- Signs of sensitive paw pads
- Seeking warmth or staying unusually close

AFTER THE HIKE:

- Rinse paws if exposed to salt or de-icer
- Dry paws and fur
- Offer water
- Warm up (blanket, warm car)
- Offer snacks (optional)
- Watch for soreness or stiffness later in the day
- Start planning your next hike!



every click helps a dog in need →

