Winter, We Are Ready for You

Published 11/23/2025 by Rei Tang

Hi everyone,

Winter is coming soon, and whether this is your first winter in Toronto or you've already experienced a few, it's completely normal to have mixed feelings about it. I still remember my first winter here — stepping outside and feeling how sharp the cold was, watching my breath turn into fog, and realizing how different it felt compared to home. Even now, I need time to adjust each year. So, if you feel a bit unsure or nervous, you're definitely not the only one.

I hope sharing some personal experiences and simple tips can make this season feel more manageable — and maybe even a little enjoyable.

Dressing for Winter: Something I Learned Over Time

Toronto's winter can surprise you. You might freeze outside and then feel too warm once you enter a building. That's why dressing in layers really helps. I usually wear a thin thermal layer to keep warmth close to my skin, a sweater or hoodie on top, and then a winter coat that blocks wind and snow. Indoors, I just remove a layer and feel comfortable right away.

And don't worry — you don't need expensive winter clothes. I built my winter wardrobe gradually over time as I learned what worked for me.

Checking the Weather Became Part of My Routine

Before coming to Canada, I never checked the weather — it always felt the same back home. But winter taught me very quickly that checking the **"Feels like"** temperature is important.

The "Feels like" temperature shows what the weather actually feels like on your skin after considering wind and humidity. It's often colder than the regular temperature in winter, so it's the number I look at the most.

It helps you know what to expect before you step outside.

Walking Safely (Yes… I Slipped Too)

Ice can be tricky because sometimes you don't even see it. In my first winter, I slipped several times — not fun, but very common. Even people who grew up in Canada slip on ice.

So don't feel embarrassed if it happens to you. Walk slowly, choose shoes with good traction, and be careful when sidewalks look shiny or wet.

Footwear matters too. Try to wear waterproof winter boots, because snow melts quickly once you step indoors. If your shoes aren't waterproof, the melted snow can soak through and make your feet cold and uncomfortable.

Staying Safe With Seneca Safe

Something I personally find helpful is the **Seneca Safe app**. Winter weather changes quickly, so having the app makes it easier to receive updates about campus closures or emergencies. It's a small thing that gives me more peace of mind.

Taking Care of Your Body

Winter air is very dry, and less sunlight can make you feel tired or low energy. For me, simple habits help, such as:

- drinking enough water
- sleeping well
- moisturizing my skin and lips
- going outside briefly during the day for sunlight
- Take **Vitamin D** if it's suitable for you
- Move your body (Even simple stretching helps!)

These little things make a noticeable difference.

Taking Care of Your Mind Too

Winter doesn't only affect the body — it also affects how we feel. Shorter days and spending more time indoors can make you feel down, even if you've lived here for years. This happens to many people, including those who are not new to Canada.

Some things that help me are going for a short walk during daylight, doing light stretches, talking to friends, or joining campus activities. And if you ever feel overwhelmed, Seneca's counselling services and wellness resources are always available. It's okay to reach out — you don't have to go through it alone.

Finding Small Joys in the Season

Winter can feel long, but it also has moments that are quite special. Holiday lights around Toronto are beautiful, fresh snow makes everything feel peaceful, and cozy cafés feel extra comforting in cold weather. If you want to try something new, activities like ice skating or skiing can be fun even if you're a complete beginner.

If you're hoping to meet new people, you're always welcome to join our International Student Support Group and other campus events — I've made new friends and meaningful connection there, and I hope you can too.

Final Words

Adjusting to a Canadian winter takes time — for everyone. There is no right or wrong way to feel. Be patient with yourself, take care of your well being, and reach out when you need support.

We're here to walk through winter with you.
Stay warm, stay safe, and take gentle care of yourself this season.

Don't go through winter alone - join our International Student Support Group events and connect with other peers, you're always welcome.

(Written by Caroline Cheng, Student Ambassador – International Student Support Group | Major: Digital & Social Media Marketing)

tags : international-student-survival-guide, ISS