

# HOW TO BUILD AN IGLOO IN YOUR OWN BACKYARD

Woman takes advantage of the cold to make a snow sanctuary

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Jane Menchyk discusses her process for making the colorful ice blocks used in her igloo at her Butler township home Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026.

Matthew Brown/Butler Eagle

MATTHEW BROWN

Jane Menchyk does her best work when it's below freezing outside.

For the past two years, Menchyk has built an igloo in the backyard of her Butler Township home. The cold temperatures almost convinced her to forego her annual art project this winter, but she couldn't stay away from the idea.

After hours of work, colorful ice blocks now make up a circular dome in Menchyk's yard, an end result she said was worth the midnight shifts.

"I almost didn't do it this year, but I saw how much snow we got," Menchyk said. "Ice is in my blood. I played ice hockey in high school and college, so I just wanted a reason to go outside."

Menchyk said anyone could learn to make an igloo of their own. She gained her knowledge of the process from videos other people have posted online demonstrating the process. She puts her own spin on her igloo by using food dye to color each ice block to make a dome that comprises a rainbow as someone walks around it.

To make the ice blocks, Menchyk leaves aluminum containers filled with water outside overnight so they are frozen and ready to place by the time she gets to work the following day. She chisels them into shape with a knife and paint scraper, a part of the process she has gotten better at in the three years she has erected an igloo.

The "mortar" Menchyk uses to attach the ice blocks to one another requires a process in itself — one where the colder the temperature, the easier it becomes. Menchyk pours snow into a bucket, then uses a makeshift masher in the form of a broken hockey stick to churn it into frozen slush as it cools to freezing.

Once the icy mortar is the proper consistency, Menchyk pours it onto a block as she slams it into place. As the mortar freezes, it glues the blocks together. After more than 200 repetitions of this process over the course of about a week, Menchyk has an igloo.

She documents the whole process by broadcasting her snow sessions on Facebook Live, which Menchyk said is to help other people learn how to make their own igloos.

Menchyk said the most important factor in making an igloo is keeping yourself warm while working in the elements, which she does by wearing special gloves, boots and snowpants outside.

"Safety is key, you don't want to be afraid of the outdoors," Menchyk said. "I feel like the Abominable Snowman."



Jane Menchyk stores some of the ice blocks used in her igloo inside a cooler Thursday, Jan. 29, 2026. Matthew Brown/Butler Eagle  
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Jane Menchyk uses a knife to shave an ice block into the right shape for her igloo Thursday, Jan. 29. Matthew Brown/Butler Eagle  
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Jane Menchyk chisels an ice block for her igloo into shape at her home Thursday, Jan. 29. Matthew Brown/Butler Eagle  
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Jane Menchyk gathers snow in a cooler to make slush for use as mortar to freeze ice blocks into place on her igloo Thursday, Jan. 29. Matthew Brown/Butler Eagle  
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Jane Menchyk mashes snow and water into a slush that will be used to freeze ice blocks into place on her igloo Thursday, Jan. 29. Matthew Brown/Butler Eagle  
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Jane Menchyk discusses the process of attaching ice blocks to her igloo at her home Thursday, Jan. 29. Matthew Brown/Butler Eagle  
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Jane Menchyk uses slush to freeze an ice block into place on the igloo she's built at her home Thursday, Jan. 29. Matthew Brown/Butler Eagle



Jane Menchyk uses slush to freeze an ice block into place on the igloo she built at her home Thursday, Jan. 29. Matthew Brown/Butler Eagle  
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Jane Menchyk uses an assortment of dyes to give her ice blocks color Thursday, Jan. 29. Matthew Brown/Butler Eagle  
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Jane Menchyk sits inside an igloo on Thursday, Jan. 29, which she built in her home's front yard over the course of a few days. Matthew Brown/Butler Eagle  
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