

Helpful Winter Wellness Strategies

Don't let seasonal blues get the best of you



The winter blues (or winter blahs or seasonal sadness) can get to all of us. Studies have shown that winter can negatively impact mood and behavior. Here are some strategies to help keep the blues away.

Let in more light

Make interior spaces brighter. Open blinds and curtains, clean windows, and trim tree and bush branches. Also, place mirrors in areas that have low natural light, such as hallways and entryways. Keeping furniture away from windows and other natural light sources can also brighten up a room.

Another way to brighten up interior spaces is to clean light fixtures and bulbs. According to studies, dirty bulbs shed nearly a third less light than clean ones. For LEDs and CFLs, remove dirt and dust with a dry cloth. Ceiling fixtures can be cleaned in a sink full of soapy water and dried with a microfiber cloth. For recessed lighting, go with a long-handle duster. Just be certain to turn off the electricity that powers fixtures before cleaning.

Stay active

Regular exercise isn't just for staying physically healthy. It's also a highly effective way to improve mental wellness. Find out what works best for you: yoga, exercise DVDs, free online workouts or even simple routines of push-ups, sit-ups, and squats. No matter what your fitness level, exercising is a quick way to boost your happiness.

Eat the right foods

When it's time to stock the pantry, consider these mood-boosting products:

- **Fish.** Particularly varieties that contain omega-3 fatty acids, like salmon, herring, sardines, and tuna.
- **Citrus fruits.** Oranges, grapefruits, lemons, and limes are a great source of mood-elevating Vitamin C.

- **Leafy greens.** Spinach, collard greens, kale, and chard are high in potassium, magnesium, and calcium, which help regulate stress hormones and sleep cycles.
- **Nuts.** Opt for walnuts, almonds, and pistachios.

Listening to favorite tunes and music is another great way to boost your mood. Singing along can feel good too! Meditation and prayer are a couple of other positive ways to combat stress.