



Our best tips for staying active in winter



When winter comes, you may be tempted to slow down your physical activity and stay inside. Despite the freezing temperatures and blustery winds, there are safe and easy ways to keep up your exercise habit. Added bonus: Maintaining your workouts is good for your mood, brain and your body. Ready to lace up? Let's go!

Before you start any new exercise routine, talk to your doctor to make sure it's safe. For outside activities, be sure to wear layers and keep your head, hands and feet warm with a hat, gloves and appropriate footwear.



Go on shorter, more frequent walks

When the weather is more extreme, long walks often just aren't doable. Instead, trade your typical 45-minute walk for three 15-minute walks spread throughout the day. The overall step count will be the same, but the walks will be easier to tolerate.



Think beyond the walk

Winter sports and activities can be a great way to get in your steps. Get out on the rink for some ice skating. Go cross-country skiing or snowshoeing. Get out the shovel and clear the snow from your sidewalk or driveway. However, if you ever experience any unusual symptoms (chest, back, arm or jaw pain, shortness of breath, lightheadedness, etc.), stop the activity and seek medical attention.



Bring Fido along for inspiration

Need motivation to get outside? Look no further than your dog! Snap on the leash and take short walks a few times a day. You'll both feel better!



Get in your activity at home with an online class

If you just can't bear to go outside, find a dance, aerobics or other cardio fitness class online. There are lots of free options these days, and the steps really add up!



Find a new best friend: the treadmill

There's no better way to get moving than on an indoor treadmill. At home, at the gym or community center, time will fly by if you do two things at once. Walk and watch TV, listen to a podcast or audiobook, or read a magazine.



Go shopping

Hop in the car and head to your favorite mall or department store and start walking. No one has to know you're just window-shopping. You may even find some good winter workout gear while you're there.



Clean your house

Get out your vacuum and other cleaning supplies and do a deep clean of a room—or the whole house! An hour of good cleaning can rack up a surprising number of steps. Just think of how happy you'll be to relax afterward in your sparkling living room.

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Winter blues: Managing seasonal sadness



As we head into winter, many people are ready to cozy up and be charmed by the comforts of colder weather. Others feel a significant sadness. If you feel down and isolated around the same time every year—with an urge to hibernate—seasonal affective disorder (SAD) may be to blame.

SAD is a seasonal depression that occurs in the late fall and winter and impacts around 5% of adults in the U.S.^{1,2}



What are the signs of SAD?

SAD is a type of depression that some people experience during months with less sunlight. Many symptoms of SAD are the same as regular depressive symptoms.³ They just occur in a seasonal pattern. These include:³

- Feeling hopeless, helpless, "empty" or worthless
- Low energy, fatigue or feeling "slowed down"
- Loss of interest in hobbies or fun activities
- Sleeping problems (unable to fall or stay asleep, oversleeping)
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering or making decisions
- Feeling irritable, frustrated or restless
- Thoughts of death or suicide²

Winter depression, or SAD, can also include symptoms such as:²

- Feeling tired even with increased sleep hours
- Feeling sad or guilty
- Weight or appetite changes, overeating, carbohydrate cravings
- Inability to sit still
- Social withdrawal



Risk factors

While SAD can affect anyone, some people are more likely than others to experience seasonal depression, including:

- **People with a personal or family history of depression.** History is an important indicator of seasonal depression. If someone in your immediate family has these downward patterns, you may be more likely to develop SAD yourself.
- **Women.** Women are diagnosed with SAD more often than men.²
- **Younger adults.** Usually, SAD first begins in young adults between 18 and 30 years old.²
- **People who live in a colder climate far from the equator.** Symptoms usually occur when and where there are fewer than 12 hours of available daylight.
- **People with low self-esteem.** Pessimistic personalities, people who tend to become overwhelmed by stress and those affected by abuse or poverty can be more vulnerable to bouts of depression.¹



Can you prevent SAD?

Seasonal affective disorder may not be able to be prevented. But there are things you can do each year to ensure you're in the best place heading into the months with less daylight.

- **Get outside.** Whether you're being active or just enjoying the sun, being outside during daylight hours is one of the best ways to nourish both your mind and body. Even sitting next to a window at work can help if you're not getting enough sunlight.
- **Eat well.** Speaking of nourishment, eating a healthy diet—lean protein, fruits and vegetables, whole grains and less sugar and processed foods—goes a long way. There's a strong link between food and mood.
- **Focus on self-care activities.** Carving out time for yourself and doing things you enjoy is key.
- **Spend time with friends and family.** Make plans and stay connected to your community as much as possible.



Managing SAD

SAD can last about four to five months before improving with the return of spring. Treatments are available through mental health professionals that can improve symptoms and help you enjoy life.¹

Often, several treatments are used together. These may include:²

- **Light therapy.** Since wintertime SAD rears its ugly head when we have fewer daylight hours, experts believe that symptoms improve with exposure to therapeutic light. If spending more time outdoors is not effective or possible, light therapy may be prescribed.
- **Talk therapy.** Speaking with a therapist trained in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can help you rework negative thoughts and behaviors into more positive ones.
- **Medication or supplements.** For people who often experience SAD, certain antidepressants and/or vitamin and mineral supplements may help. You'll need to talk to a psychiatrist about what may be right for you.

Undiagnosed, untreated or uncontrolled medical conditions can lead to similar symptoms, so thorough evaluation by a medical professional is key to ensure you receive the best care and the right treatment options.^{1,2}

Being proactive and taking care of yourself as you head into the winter season can help keep the winter blues at bay.

¹<https://www.psychiatry.org/patients-families/depression/what-is-depression>

²<https://www.psychiatry.org/Patients-Families/Seasonal-Affective-Disorder>

³<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/topics/depression>

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Tasty winter fruit recipes



Vitamin-packed fruit can be a nutritious part of your meals and snacks any time of year. Even during the colder months, there are plenty of in-season fruits to choose from. Below are three fruit-forward recipes that are perfect for enjoying in the winter.

Microwaved pear crumble mug

Top with a scoop of yogurt, some blueberries and banana for a sweet breakfast or even dessert.

Makes 1 serving | Prep: 3 minutes | Cook: 4 minutes



Ingredients

- 1 pear, chopped
- 2 Tbsp water
- 1/8 tsp ground cinnamon
- 1/8 tsp vanilla extract
- 2 Tbsp rolled oats
- 1 tsp ground flaxseeds
- 1 tsp unsalted butter, softened
- 1 Tbsp chopped walnuts or almonds

Preparation

In a microwave-safe mug, combine pear, water, cinnamon and vanilla. Microwave on high for about 2 minutes, until pear is softened. While the pear is cooking, mix the oats, flaxseeds, butter and walnuts or almonds until it resembles granola. Mix the pear in the mug, and top with oat mixture. Place in microwave and cook for another 1-2 minutes.

Recipe continues on next page.

Nutrition information per serving | Serving size: About 3/4 cup



Calories: 206 | Total fat: 9 g | Saturated fat: 2 g | Sodium: 6 mg | Cholesterol: 5 mg | Total carbs: 30 g | Fiber: 7 g
Sugars: 14 g | Protein: 4 g | Potassium: 264 mg

Orange & greens salad

Eat by itself or add a protein like salmon or grilled chicken to make it a more filling meal.

Makes 4 servings | Prep: 6 minutes



Ingredients

- 6 cups mixed greens
- 2 medium oranges, sliced into thin rounds and quartered
- ½ small red onion, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup crumbled goat cheese
- ⅓ cup sliced almonds
- ¼ cup olive oil
- 2 tsp champagne vinegar

Preparation

Toss the greens, oranges, onion, goat cheese and almonds together in a large bowl. In a small bowl, whisk together olive oil and vinegar. Toss the salad with dressing just before serving.

Nutrition information per serving | Serving size: 1 3/4 cups



Calories: 371 | Total fat: 17 g | Saturated fat: 2 g | Sodium: 103 mg | Cholesterol: 1 mg | Total carbs: 46 g | Fiber: 15 g
Sugars: 15 g | Protein: 11 g | Potassium: 653 mg

Pomegranate salsa

Spoon on top of plain grilled fish or chicken to turn a standard meal into something special.

Makes 4 servings | Prep: 5 minutes



Ingredients

- 1 cup pomegranate arils (seeds)
- ⅓ cup finely chopped cucumber
- 2 Tbsp finely chopped onion
- 2 Tbsp chopped fresh cilantro
- 3 tsp lime juice

Preparation

Toss all ingredients together in a bowl. Chill in refrigerator for at least 30 minutes before serving.

Recipe continues on next page.

Nutrition information per serving | Serving size: Approximately 1/3 cup



Calories: 33 | Total fat: 1 g | Saturated fat: 0 g | Sodium: 1 mg | Cholesterol: 0 mg | Total carbs: 7 g | Fiber: 2 g
Sugars: 5 g | Protein: 1 g | Potassium: 105 mg

Apple-cheddar melt

Serve with 1-2 cups of your choice of vegetable, or select a side to help complete a balanced meal.

Makes 1 serving | Prep: 3 minutes | Cook: 6 minutes



Ingredients

- ½ apple, medium, thinly sliced
- 1 slice low-fat, low-sodium cheddar cheese
- 2 slices sprouted, whole grain bread

Preparation

Layer thin apple slices and cheese between bread slices. Broil or toast for 6 minutes.

Nutrition information per serving | Serving size: 1 sandwich



Calories: 297 | Total fat: 12 g | Saturated fat: 6 g | Sodium: 206 mg | Cholesterol: 28 mg | Total carbs: 36 g | Fiber: 6 g
Sugars: 13 g | Protein: 14 g | Potassium: 256 mg

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