



Winter Wellbeing for Carers

With all the cold weather, seasonal bugs, lack of sunshine, shorter days, and increased risk of slipping on ice or wet leaves, Winter can be bad for our health, so what can carers do to maintain their wellbeing whilst caring for others during this season.

Keep Warm

Prevent and alleviate health problems by keeping warm. 18c is the recommended minimum temperature for rooms you spend most time in.

Advice on fuel costs, energy saving, insulation, and benefits such as the Warm Home Discount Scheme, Cold Weather and Winter Fuel Payments from the Government can be found here <https://www.gov.uk/improve-energy-efficiency>

You can also ask your gas, electric or oil supplier for a tariff check and any further support they can provide.

Try hot water bottles filled from the kettle, microwave-heated bottles, stones, scented wheat-filled wraps or soft toys, often called 'wheaties' or 'warmies'. If getting up and down to care frequently, consider a portable version to keep tucked to you.



Electric blankets, using draft excluders, layers of clothes, fluffy socks, shutting curtains and blinds can all help too. Use local delivery services from pharmacies, get groceries brought to you to reduce time spent out in very cold or freezing conditions.

Keep Eating Well

Have hot, wholesome, tasty meals each day like porridge, soups, stews, curries and crumbles to keep toasty from the inside out.

Warm drinks can be a comfort, choose your favourites or experiment with different types of teas, coffees, hot chocolate with toppings, Horlicks, hot milk, Bovril or Miso Soup. It can be easy to forget to drink when caring but try to savour the times when you have your hands wrapped round a hot mug, taking a few moments of peace.

Keep Connected

Relationships can become more strained during the festive period or from being indoors together more during Winter. Do whatever helps you to deal with this, go into another room, take deep breaths, count to ten, do something different from what you were doing to distract, put on music, write it out, have a bath.

Be in touch with people outside your home even if just by phone, email or messages. Talk to someone trusted about how you feel.

Keep Moving

Whether this is through day-to-day tasks like housework or exercising at home our bodies are designed to move. Research has shown going for a short walk each day boosts our mental wellbeing, as well as our circulation and physical health.

Keep Interested

Keeping motivated and our mood up is important for wellbeing. This could be through setting small achievable goals or having an intention for each day, doing indoor hobbies or following interests or current affairs.

Keep Getting Outside

When safe to go out, and if you can around caring responsibilities, it is important to do so for fresh air, sunlight and vitamin D which keeps our bones, teeth and muscles healthy. We are at risk of a deficiency if we are homebound or indoors much of the time. A lack of vitamin D can be avoided by taking 10 to 15 minutes out each day, even just wrapping up warm and standing beyond your door. The best time to go is around noon when the sun is at the highest, but anytime between 11 and 3pm should get you what you need.

Resources

NHS

'How to Stay Well in Winter' advice

BEST OF 'WELLNESS' ON YOU TUBE

Winter Wellness – connecting with your senses

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZT_aejeb9Rg 2.5 minutes from St Patrick's Mental Health Services

Mental Wellbeing – 6 ways to boost your mental health this Winter

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Akyz2TCtbCE>

Staying Healthy in Winter as We Age – medically-based advice from Dr Ahsan

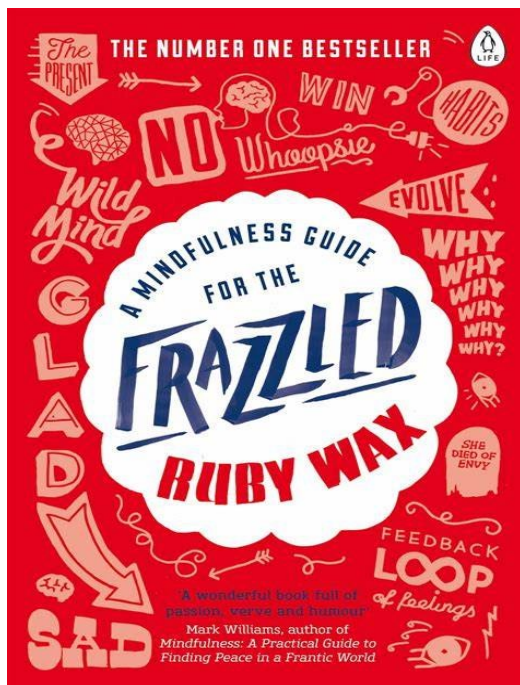
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FQoGtvm62HE>

LIBRARIES

Reading Well

Reading Well initiative providing information and support for managing situations, common health conditions or dealing with difficult feelings and experiences.

An example from their list is:



'A Mindfulness Guide for the Frazzled' by Ruby Wax

ISBN: 9780241972069

Ruby Wax lays out her mindfulness techniques, making simple changes that give us time to breathe, reflect and live in the moment. With mindfulness advice for relationships, for parents, for children and for teenagers, and a six-week course based on her studies of Mindfulness Based Cognitive Therapy with Mark Williams at Oxford University, A Mindfulness Guide for the Frazzled is the only guide you need for a healthier, happier life. Ruby's approach to Mindfulness is something that can help us all: learning to notice your thoughts and feelings so you can truly experience life.

The books are available to borrow from your local library. Selected titles are also available to borrow as e-books and audiobooks. Visit your local library website to join the library and access books electronically.

<https://reading-well.org.uk/books/books-on-prescription/mental-health>

WELLBEING INSPIRATION QUOTES

"Spring passes, and one remembers one's innocence. Summer passes, and one remembers one's exuberance. Autumn passes, and one remembers one's reverence. Winter passes, and one remembers one's perseverance." Yoko Ono.

"How many lessons of faith and beauty we should lose, if there were no winter in our year"
Thomas Wentworth Higginson.

"To appreciate the beauty of a snowflake, it is necessary to stand out in the cold." Aristotle.

"In the middle of winter, I, at last, discovered that there was in me an invincible summer."
Albert Camus.