

Adult Day Self-Care Newsletter

December 2022

Winter Wellness

By the time you are reading this issue, you are already aware of the days growing shorter as we move towards the [winter solstice](#) on December 21, which has the shortest amount of daylight for the year. The changes in the light and the cooler weather can affect our mood, our sleep, and our daily routines. Many of us prefer to spend more time indoors, to sleep later in the morning, and to eat whatever we consider comfort food. While we may look forward to winter holiday traditions and gatherings, these events can add stress to our lives. Weather challenges affect us in many areas, including the physical demands of clearing snow and ice, transportation delays and dangers, and unpredictable school and business closures. It can be difficult to keep up the health and wellness activities that sustained us in warmer and sunnier days of summer. Planning ahead can help. Our colleague, Dr. Peggy Swarbrick, has created a [Winter Wellness Planner](#) that can help you address the personal barriers that get in your way over the winter, while building in the winter activities and events that you find most enjoyable. You are welcome to download the *Planner* for free, and to print and share it with colleagues, friends, family caregivers, and others who may benefit. You'll find some tips for Winter Wellness on page 2.

Common Winter Health Risks

Certain [illnesses](#) are more common in winter, such as colds and flu. COVID risk increases, too. Vaccines can help prevent serious illness.

Cold weather can be harsh on your skin, and frequent handwashing, although important for reducing risk of illness, can add to the problem. Choose the [right moisturizer](#) for your skin type, avoiding lotion with alcohol or AHA, which can actually dry you out even more.

Hypothermia occurs when someone's body temperature becomes dangerously low. Babies and [older adults](#) are at greater risk. [Learn the signs](#) of this medical emergency, how to prevent it, and what to do if it occurs.

Heart conditions can be a concern in winter, since [cold weather](#) can increase blood pressure and raise cholesterol, so be aware of the signs of a [heart attack](#) or [stroke](#). [Women](#) may have different symptoms that indicate a heart attack.



Wintering

We all experience times in life when we retreat, withdraw, or hibernate. These may be times of stress, grief, transition, or illness. Pulling back can give us the space we need to heal and recover if we use it well, or add to our suffering if we cut ourselves off from the activities and people who help us be well. For more information, see page 2 of this issue.

Tips for Winter Wellness

For most people, certain areas are key to wellness. You can learn more about the eight dimensions of wellness and take a [wellness quiz](#) to reflect on your wellness habits. For now, here are a few winter tips to stay healthy.

Comfort foods: There's nothing wrong with eating for comfort, especially if you include comfort foods that are really good for you. For example, a hearty pea soup can warm your insides, while giving you all-important fiber and lots of vitamins. Paired with a thick slice of whole grain toast, pea soup is a complete meal.

Physical activity: Remember the four types of exercise needed to benefit your whole body: aerobic or stamina-building exercise, like walking or snow-shoeing; balance exercises, like yoga or tai chi; flexibility exercises, like stretching; and strengthening exercises. The [National Institute for Aging tips](#) for older adults can help people of all ages. Try something new, like this relaxing 10-minute video on [Shibashi Tai Chi](#) (part 1) with Mark Peters.

Sleep: You can find trustworthy information and guidance on improving your sleep at the [Sleep Education](#) website for the American Academy of Sleep Medicine. For example, they recommend better winter sleep through regular physical activity, exposure to natural light, keeping your sleeping space at the proper temperature, and using a humidifier.

Social connections: [Isolation and loneliness](#) are bad for your health and wellness in many ways. Adult Day Centers help older adults to engage in meaningful social activities. Other options, for people who are able to participate, include volunteering, visiting neighbors, taking a class, joining a group exercise class, and attending special winter events, such as musical performances. You may want to mask up in large groups indoors to stay safe!

For More Information

Katherine May's book, [Wintering](#), is subtitled "the power of rest and retreat in difficult times." She has her own [podcast](#) and has been featured on other podcasts, if you want to learn more without committing to the book.

If you, or someone you know, is grieving, you also may appreciate Anderson Cooper's podcast series on the topic [All There Is](#).

Care2Caregivers Website

Check out our [Adult Day Resources pages](#). You can access these directly through the drop-down menu in the Professional Resources section

As always, you can access the Self-Care resources on our website for free. Use our NEW link:

Self-Care for Professional Caregivers
<https://care2caregivers.com/professional-resources/self-care/>

Upcoming Caregiver Education

Winter Wellness for Caregivers

Winter brings changes in weather, light and activities. Some people experience challenges with isolation and mood, maintaining health routines and managing complex feelings and experiences related to winter holidays. Join us to explore strategies for supporting wellness in many life dimensions throughout the winter and create a personal wellness plan.

December 14, 2022 1:00pm

Click [HERE](#) to register

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or call Care2Caregivers at

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visit our website www.care2caregivers.com for information on caregiver support groups

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