

WINTER WELLBEING

by Louise, PCN Social Prescriber

As we head deeper into winter, many people struggle with the seemingly endless cold weather, and days where it feels the sun forgets to rise. Here are some tips that may help to stave off those winter blues and stick to your goals.

Connect with your body and nature

Stay Active – aim for 20-30 minutes every day. A daily brisk walk can boost your energy, lift your mood and make everyday activities easier. It can be as simple as a walk in your lunch break and doesn't mean having to go to a gym or participate in a sport.

Check out the following links:

<https://www.csp.org.uk/public-patient/keeping-active-and-healthy/love-activity-hate-exercise-campaign>



NHS website also has some home workout videos which are just 10 minutes long. Home workout videos-NHS (www.nhs.uk)



If you work from home, you can still commute to your desk by taking a short walk around the block first. Getting fresh air has health benefits for both the mind and body and more oxygen results in greater brain function, improved concentration and greater energy. In addition, venturing outdoors helps you to produce Vitamin D from the sun vital for our bone and muscle health.

Arranging to meet with a friend to go for a walk, can often help you to stay motivated. Think about a group of you setting up a challenge over 12 months or joining an online challenge for charity -there are often 'walking for health' challenges set up over 2 months. Look out for winter wellbeing walks.

You can exercise indoors for free too - from hula hooping to dancing to your favourite music, following exercises online. If you have a health condition check with your GP before taking up any new exercise programme. It doesn't have to be formal exercise, doing a spring clean, pottering around the house all help.

Eat healthy and drink in moderation—healthy winter meals such as stews, soups, curries and casseroles, ensure you get plenty of fruit and vegetables to support your immune system. Porridge with fruit and stewed fruit are all good options. Remember frozen fruit and vegetables are just as healthy, and often cheaper.

Bake healthier treats if you tend to snack during the winter and preparing meals in advance can often help, as well as batch cooking.

REMEMBER: You are what you eat – eating lots of the wrong foods may very definitely affect mood negatively.

Your Mental Health

Take time out every day to focus on yourself. Remember that you matter.

Talking and socialising – helps a lot of people; sharing troubles can help keep things in perspective. Listening to and supporting friends can help get “outside of yourself”.

If you feel lonely, maybe try to make friends with a neighbour, volunteer for a charity, or join local groups in your area. Learning something new or keeping our minds active with quizzes and cross-words. Looking after indoor plants may even help to raise your mood levels.

Daily affirmations – take time out of every day to say something positive about yourself out loud. This can help us feel more confident and comfortable in our own skin. It can help us to move away from that critical self-talk.

Social Media – comparison is the thief of joy. If you are having a low day, take some time away from social media.

No matter how many self-care tips you read, if you don't spend the time focusing on what it means to you, you'll never get the relaxation you crave.

Whatever it is, mark out time on your calendar each day, even if it's only 5 minutes, to focus on yourself.

Your Physical Health

- Keep warm and try to keep your heating at 18°C (living rooms) and 16°C (bedrooms).
- Keep moving regularly to help to stay warm.
- Have regular hot meal and drinks.
- Protect yourself against infections: ensure you have had your flu, Covid, RSV, shingles and other vaccinations, once you are eligible.
- Call your local Council for advice on grants and ways to stay warm for less.
Cornwall: 0800 954 1956
Devon: 0345 155 1015
- Join the Priority Services Register with your service provider (water, gas, electricity) if you are eligible.
- Insulate and draught-proof your home to keep the warmth in. Your Council may be able to help with this.
- Get a free home fire-safety check:
Cornwall: 0800 358 1999
Devon: 0800 050 2999 (if urgent)
- Check and service your boiler at least annually to ensure it is working efficiently.

Where to go for warmth

With heating costs being a considerable part of most people's budgets, it can be helpful to go out to find safe, warm spaces locally. Avoid being cold, if you can. Here are a few local options. Please check each venue for activities and opening times.



LIBRARIES	HOLSWORTHY	With Community Fridge
	BUDE	With Community Larder
	LAUNCESTON	Lots of activities throughout the week and some Saturdays.
	OKEHAMPTON	
COMMUNITY VENUES	OKEHAMPTON	Wellbeing Café, St James' Street
	OKEHAMPTON	Ockment Centre, North Street
	BUDE	Berries Community Café, Berries Avenue
CHURCH SETTINGS	HOLSWORTHY	Methodist Church, Bodmin Street
	BUDE	Neetside Methodist Church Hall
	BRADWORTHY	St John Baptist Church, Bradworthy—safe space. Call Rectory on 01409 251015.