



ZEVO HEALTH

The Ultimate Winter Wellbeing Guide



Winter poses us with a variety of challenges to our health and wellbeing.

The shorter days become barriers to many outdoor activities.

The weather becomes a daily obstacle, tempting us into a more sedentary existence.

The culmination of these factors often indirectly impacts our social connections. Coupled with a natural decline in Vitamin D levels from reduced sunlight and more colds and flu around our community, we can often feel a bit down, which is natural.

But there are ways we can support ourselves. We have compiled a list of practical tips to help you bolster your body and mind through those cold winter months.

Power of Botanicals



Keeping a solid immunity over the winter should be our wellbeing plan's foundation.

A great way to support this is through the introduction of evidence-backed foods;

Echinacea can decrease both the risk and duration of the common cold. 1 Usually found in drop form or tea form, which makes it an easy addition to your winter kit!

Ginger contains the phytonutrient, gingerol, which helps prevent bacteria from binding to upper respiratory tract mucosa. 2 Ginger is a popular tea option, but having fresh ginger at hand for additions to drinks and meals takes it to the next level!

Garlic contains a potent phytonutrient compound called allicin, which has anti-bacterial properties. 3 The best way to unlock this compound is to crush your garlic and let it sit before adding it to your pot or pan, this helps the allicin bloom and be more effective!



Harness the magic of mushrooms

Mushrooms help boost your immunity troops in your body, natural killer cells, and T-cells. This enables you to fight off an array of troubles that come your way over the winter.

They are also very high in antioxidants and surprisingly high in vitamin D, which is often much appreciated, with our typical source (the sun) seemingly disappearing until Spring.

All mushrooms will give you a boost but for an extra kick try the Asian Mushrooms varieties like; Shiitake, Reishi, Turkey Tail, Chaga or Cordyceps.

Mushrooms soups, risotto or even in place of beef in a ragu or lasagne are some of our favourite ways to enjoy them!



Anti - Inflammatory Drinks



Who doesn't love hot chocolate on a cold wintery evening? And you can do it confidently when using cacao due to its high content of flavonoids. Flavonoids inhibit pro-inflammatory enzymes in the body. A perfect antidote to a stressful day!

If hot chocolate seems a bit rich, or you are still searching for that coffee, swap for a homemade brew: test out moon milk, spiced ginger and lemon, Turmeric/Golden Milk or a chai latte!



Spice it up

Throughout human history, spices have played a huge role, from defining culture and ethnicity, to being a driving force behind modern trade.

But sadly, they are often forgotten and sit isolated in your kitchen cupboard, but this winter it's time they made a comeback! Here is two to start with;



Cinnamon: No flavour quite says winter like cinnamon, but that's not the only reason to be seasoning coffees and teas with the versatile spice;

Cinnamon has been shown to lower glucose, insulin and cholesterol in people with elevated serum glucose. 4

Oregano:

Oregano is an aromatic herb whose name means "mountain joy". Interestingly it is rich in a variety of health-benefiting compounds and antioxidants. Particularly, carvacrol, which is a compound found in oregano and known for its antibacterial properties.



Laughter

Amazingly laughter has a strong physiological response that links it to a host of positive health outcomes; it releases nitric oxide, a chemical that relaxes blood vessels, reduces blood pressure and decreases clotting.

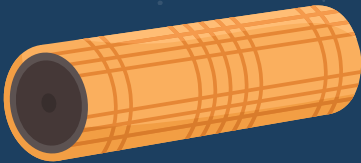
But we often don't think to prescribe ourselves laughter - but this winter maybe you should! Planning comedies during movie nights or inviting friends over for fun board games! Laughter really is the best medicine. especially when confronted by our daily concerns and stressors.



Movement

When temptation is to cuddle up and hibernate – keep moving and reduce sedentary behaviour to optimise immune function.. up to one hour of steady-state aerobic benefits immune function.

The large-scale study of almost 200,000 cross-country skiers found that being physically active halves the risk of developing clinical anxiety over time. The study, from Sweden, focused on skiing, but the researchers said almost any kind of aerobic activity likely helps protect us against excessive worry and dread, a cheering thought as we face yet another grim pandemic season. 5



Massage & Bodywork

Massage and bodywork are often forgotten but are effective ways to destress. This is especially true for people in demanding roles (both ends of the spectrum – either on the computer all day or in physically taxing jobs).

Massage has shown itself to be an effective form of stress reduction, with correlations to improved immune function and reductions in anxiety. 6

You can either start working on yourself with a variety of tools on the market like foam-rollers and massage guns or better yet - treat yourself to a 1-hour session with a professional.



Get Creative

Get creative – habit and routine can rule the roost in winter months and we can easily adopt an unconscious disposition of ‘endurance and perseverance.’ But just because daylight is limited and temperatures are low, does not mean we need to starve our creative side!

Consider looking at a creative endeavour that doesn't rely on summer conditions, such as picking up an instrument, cooking new dishes, creating some art or even getting winter kit on and exploring those beautiful wintery conditions.



Breathe! Breathwork Practice



The effects of attentiveness to breath, bodily sensations and conscious movement can be profoundly restorative and rebalancing. 7

We can't avoid all sources of stress in our lives, nor would we want to. But we can develop healthier ways of responding to them. One way is to invoke the relaxation response. Regular breathing practice can support this, it might only be on a minute of exercise every day, but it can slow you down and ground you.



Flow with the natural rhythms



Seasons are important.

They denote different stages of natural growth and deterioration. In nature there is no way to fight them, the seasons come and go, and bring new life each year. In modern life we try to protect ourselves against them – we control the temperatures of our buildings, we eat our favourite foods year-round, and we stay in the season of modern life – a privileged comfort.

But with this comes a constant detachment from our primitive, natural cycles. It can be supportive to accept that we are in a cycle, one where in the winter often our social circle retracts, we get colder and new emotions can appear. Fighting these can leave you exhausted but riding the wave that is this unique set of seasonal variations can make you more present and accepting during the winter.



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We hope you enjoy experimenting with some of these tips over the coming months or that they at least serve as warm reminders of the many tiny but creative ways we can enhance our health and day-to-day life, irrespective of conditions!

Keep an eye out for our 2023 Trends publication in January with more tips on employee wellbeing for the year ahead.

Research

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