

Winter is Coming!

Tips for Surviving Winter during the Pandemic

During this challenging time, it can be hard to know what to expect. What we do know is that the pandemic is not over and winter is coming. Soon the days will become darker and colder. We also know that we need to remain vigilant around mask wearing (as well as physical distancing and hand washing).

Prepare for your Physical Health:

- Get a Flu Shot.
- Start an indoor workout routine.
- Plan some healthy meals for yourself: purchase some food pantry items that you like and that can last a long time.
- Create a health kit. Include: medicine, a thermometer, and other health care items you will need for colds, flus, and the coronavirus.
- Make sure you have a mask (or two) that fit you well.
- Create a car kit. Include: extra masks, hand sanitizer, tissues.
- Familiarize yourself with the locations and procedures of convenient COVID testing sites in your area.

Support your Mental Health:

If you have health insurance, consider lining up a therapist. It's best to identify support before more challenging times come along (and also because waitlists for therapists may be long).

If you don't have insurance that covers therapy, find a therapy workbook or join a support group online. Strengthen your personal support network.

Get help 24/7 by calling the Suicide Prevention Hotline at 1-800-273-8255 or texting "HOME" to 741741 for the Crisis Text Line.

Bundle Up and Keep Warm:

- Pull out warm winter clothes and outer wear so you can socialize outside, or inside with windows open. Second hand stores offer affordable options.
- If you can afford it, buy a fire pit or a space heater for outdoor hangouts.

Stay Physically Distanced *and* Connected:

- Set up a weekly/monthly video call with family or friends.
- Connect with your neighbors (drop off baked goods or shovel their sidewalk).
- Arrange a penpal. (Many Senior Centers or Libraries are setting these up.)
- Volunteer with [Belmont Helps](#) or any nonprofit organization you are passionate about.
- Start or join a book club or a free write!

Get Comfortable at Home:

Set up your workplace/school desk in a way that is comfortable and productive:

- Put your workspace near the window for lots of natural light.
- Consider a lap desk.

Set up your house so that you feel comfortable and content spending time there:

- Rearrange the furniture, decorate, consider a fresh coat of paint, treat yourself to that one new thing you know will make your life easier.
- Set up your room so you can get the best night's sleep.
- Get happy, cozy lighting for your house, e.g. candles, festive string lights, or a sun lamp.

Explore winter-friendly activities you enjoy:

- Snowshoeing, building a snowman or fort, ice skating, sledding, snowboarding, skiing.
- Start a new indoor hobby: reading, knitting, painting, coloring, watch a TV series, discover classic movies, learn a new game.

Visit the CDC website at www.cdc.gov for additional tips for the winter season, important safety information, and safe ways to enjoy the Winter Holiday season.

Main references: [Prepare Now for Your Pandemic Winter. Your Future Self Will Thank You. \(NPR\)](#); [How We Survive the Winter \(The Atlantic\)](#); [If You're Already Dreading Winter, Here Are Some Small Ways to Prepare Now \(Vice\)](#)