

10 Ideas for Self-Care in the Winter



By Eileen Wittig

Winter is back, and with it comes the instinct to hibernate and the inclination to lazily wait out the weather until Spring returns. But while that sounds enticing, it can lead to cabin fever and stress. We need self-care, done in a way that will help our emotional health. Here are 10 ideas to care for yourself through the Winter weather:

1. **Plan something to be excited for every day.** Before you go to sleep, think of something to get you excited to get out of bed in the morning, even if it's small: An outing, a favorite lunch, an outfit that makes you feel good, a cozy evening at home after work, etc.
2. **Take advantage of the season for Winter exercise.** Go skating, skiing, or sledding for some fresh air and get your blood pumping.

3. **Treat yourself to a mini stay-cation.** Light a festive cedar- or pine-scented candle, wrap yourself in a weighted blanket, and listen to soothing music or watch your favorite comedy show.
4. **Turn your bedroom into an oasis** by including things to incorporate all five senses and encourage mindfulness. Add a little plant, toss a fluffy blanket on the bed, invest in a white-noise machine with nature noises or get a similar app, put out a lavender-scented diffuser, and keep little mints or candies around.
5. **Put on a cozy sweater!** The feeling of something warm and comforting on your skin is centering and calming.
6. **Stick to your normal sleep schedule.** Sleeping longer than you do in the summer may sound like a good self-care idea, but disrupting your usual cycle confuses your brain and your body, which can make you feel stressed and depressed.
7. **Keep eating healthy.** We want to hibernate in the winter and eat cookies all day, but winter fruits and vegetables will leave you feeling energized and happy rather than sluggish and moody. Try clementines, pomegranates, brussels sprouts, and sweet potatoes to fill you up while packing a lot of nutrients and vitamins.
8. **Re-focus with mindfulness.** It will ground and calm you as the cold wind blows outside and end-of-year deadlines approach. Stretch, go for a quick walk, close your eyes and meditate, or look at nature for just 40 seconds -- even if it's a picture on your phone.
9. **Have fun!** Start a puzzle, have a movie night, find the coziest coffee shops in town and meet up with friends, visit a cat cafe, or head to an animal shelter to pet the animals.
10. **Get support from a professional.** Therapy isn't only for mental health disorders or trauma. Since winter can negatively affect your mood, you may find yourself needing some extra support. There's no shame in getting help from a trained professional!

Eileen Wittig is the Marketing Associate at Headway. She is thrilled to use her writing and research experience to help serve the emotional and mental health needs of as many people as possible.