

Thriving in the Second Half of Winter

Cold, wet and dark – by August we're sick of it! How can we stay thrive in second half of winter?

What are the biggest threats to health in second half of winter?

- Repeated colds and viruses – in the second half of winter we may start to feel that we get rid of one cold only to be struck down by a second one.
- Lack of energy – it seems to take a big effort just to get out of the house some days!
- Strains and strains – we seem to be hit by muscle tears or sprains every time we try to do something.

Why do we feel this way?

- Getting cold – it takes energy to warm up leaving less for the immune system. Also – cold muscles are more susceptible to being torn.
- Darkness – Lack of sunlight has significant effects on our physical and mental health.
- Wet or icy pavements – Injuries from slipping and falling are more common when it's wet or icy.

What can we do to help our immune system?

- Avoid people who are clearly sick – Simply stay away from the person on the train who's coughing and blowing their nose or the work colleague who complains about diarrhoea.
- Get some sunshine – Get out on the sunny days or put a chair where the sun comes through the window so you can sit there on the coldest days.
- Get plenty of sleep – Rest is important for the immune system and remember that getting cold at night can disturb your sleep so make sure there are enough quilts on the bed.

How can we increase our energy?

- Stay warm and dry – Dress for the weather and remember to take a raincoat or umbrella.
- Do some exercise – A brisk walk in the sunshine is the best exercise but if you don't want to go outside, go to the gym or join in an exercise or yoga class online.
- Manage your stress – The cost of power, health bills not to mention that Christmas is coming are stressful thoughts! Meditation, relaxation, breathing exercises or acupuncture can help!
- Get sweaty – Do some vigorous exercise or have a sauna!
- Stop to smell the flowers – Or at least stop to look at the late winter flowers! It can give your energy and mood a boost!

What about the strains and sprains?

- Warm up – before doing anything strenuous – even gardening work – warm up those muscles for a good twenty minutes. Remember: it takes longer to warm up in cooler weather!
- Wear good shoes – something with a non-stick sole especially if it's wet or icy. Don't risk a fall!
- Cool off but stay warm – after exercise, remember to stretch those muscles! But stay warm as you do it and stay out of the wind, especially if you're sweating!

What should we be eating?

- Warming foods are best - think slow cooked stews or casseroles or things cooked slowly in the oven like roasts. Avoid the salads for the moment!
- Fresh, in season fruit vegetables are the best: lemons and apples, carrots, beans, broccoli, cauliflower, brussel sprouts, cabbage and onions.
- Drink plenty of water! Cold water isn't very appetising in winter so try tepid water or herbal teas.
- Avoid too much caffeine, alcohol or processed or sugary foods – they'll make you feel worse!