

10 Things to Do During Wintertime

It's cold, it's gloomy, and the weather outside might even be frightful! The winter months make it difficult to keep your mind and body active, and the added pressure of being cooped up makes it hard to think "outside of the box" when it comes to what to do with your time. Here are a few ideas to get you started – try one or two, and if you need more tips or someone to talk to, call the EAP for a confidential referral to a counselor. (Bonus: Virtual counseling is available, so you don't have to worry about rescheduling due to inclement weather!)

1. Indoor workouts

Check out YouTube for some at-home workouts – many don't even need equipment beyond an open space in your house! Warm up and stretch first, and don't forget to drink water before and after. Not only will working out keep you warm, but it has the added benefit of burning calories.

2. Keep your mind active

Jigsaw puzzles, crosswords, logic puzzles, Sudoku, or word scrambles are a great way to exercise your brain while you pass the time. Practicing or learning how to play a musical instrument is another way to focus, relieve stress, and keep the neurons firing. You can also try learning a new language with apps like Duolingo, or borrow some books from your local library.

3. Get creative

Knitting, crocheting, macramé, sewing, quilting, quilling, felting, cross-stitching, latch-hook kits, diamond art, paint-by-numbers, scrapbooking, origami, decoupage, candle-making, calligraphy – the possibilities are endless! It doesn't have to be perfect; you only need to enjoy it.

4. Cooking and baking

Try some new recipes, or learn this essential life skill! Online sites like Food Network, All Recipes, and Yummly can point you in the right direction if you need some ideas, or you can buy a copy of the classic cookbook *The Joy of Cooking* for some tried-and-true recipes and tips. YouTube is another great resource for beginners and experts alike.

5. Indoor gardening

If you have windowsills, consider growing some herbs or other greens! Parsley, marjoram, cilantro, and basil are all delicious fresh – and are easy to grow from seed or from tiny plants.

6. Journaling/Blogging

Whether you prefer an online platform or an old-fashioned blank book, it helps to jot your thoughts somewhere for later reference. It's especially helpful if you're working toward a goal, want to pen some creative thoughts, or need an outlet for your stress.

7. Start a book/game/dinner club with friends

If you can't get together physically, use a virtual meeting tool like Zoom, Skype, or Facetime and plan some time to spend with other people.

8. Have a media marathon

Pop some popcorn, make some snacks, grab some drinks, and line up a few of your favorite movies or television shows to watch for a few hours or all day. You can even host a virtual "watch party" with friends and family using Zoom or a browser extension like Scener (only on Chrome) or Netflix Party (Chrome or Opera).

9. Tackle that (indoor) house project you've been putting off

Been meaning to put up some shelves or art? Maybe swapping out that hall light or re-painting the living room? Even if you're just doing some de-cluttering or re-organizing, now's a great time for it.

10. Treat Yourself

Thanks to sites like YouTube and Pinterest, it's easy to find some DIY tutorials for hair, makeup, manicures, and other self-care routines. It may be simpler than you thought, and may help you to save money as well! Keep it realistic and don't do more than what you're comfortable with, though. If you'd rather just take a long, hot bath and/or read a book, go for it! Self-care is all about YOU.

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