

The start of winter can be a time of joy, and of challenge. Many of us have positive experiences of winter/holiday gatherings, and/or outdoor winter recreation. Some people face challenges including isolation, limited ability to exercise, memories of losses, overeating, and overspending, especially during the winter and holiday season.

This wellness planner is designed to help you plan ahead so you can maintain a sense of wellness in all eight dimensions as you move into the winter season. If winter creates wellness challenges for you, we encourage you to work through this document, identifying strengths, challenges, and healthy habits and routines. You may want to consider these in the context of the ***eight dimensions of wellness*** depicted below.



**Strengths**

**Winter Memories**

Winter is memorable. Many of us have recollections of great winter experiences which can be worth writing down.

**Describe a positive winter memory.**

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**What do you see as the benefits of the winter season?**

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The holiday season is an annual festive period. Our own cultures and family traditions are a big part of this. The holiday season can have some impacts on health (social, emotional, physical, etc.).

**How do you celebrate the winter/holiday season?**

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**Challenges, Stressors, and Triggers**

Let’s look at some common wellness challenges people face during the winter/holiday season. There is a column for you to identify any challenges you often encounter. Finally, this is your chance to think about ways to prepare to deal with those challenges. Even though our identified “common stressors” are mostly emotional, you may well have a different mix of challenges.

Wellness Dimension	Common Challenges	Your Challenges	How You Might Cope
Physical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Exercise can be tougher</li> <li>• Holiday activities can interrupt critical sleep cycles</li> </ul>		
Intellectual	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Students often deal with the hectic rush to complete projects and assignments before end of term or winter recess</li> </ul>		
Social			
Spiritual			
Mental/Emotional	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Short dark days often depress moods</li> <li>• Alcohol is typically served during holiday functions which can be a trigger for some</li> <li>• Holiday travel can be a major source of contention and stress. Dealing with traffic and the short-temperers of other travelers can also be quite challenging</li> <li>• Social anxiety may be heightened when we attend parties or functions with large gatherings of people</li> <li>• Holidays often bring up powerful emotions of departed friends and loved ones</li> </ul>		
Environmental			
Occupational	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some of us feel a bit “at odds’ when away from our normal work during holidays</li> </ul>		
Financial	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Some holidays involve the obligation of spending money on</li> </ul>		

gifts, food, travel, etc.

**Strategies**

**Strategy 1** – Keep doing what works for you. Stick to your best routines – diet, exercise, meditation, doing the Times Crossword, playing with your cat, etc. Take a minute and list some of your routines that you will stick to during the winter/holiday season:

Wellness Strategy	Doing it Now? Or When I will start
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

**Strategy 2** – Identify the people in your life who can provide you with support for the challenges which may come up in the winter/holiday season.

Supporter	Methods to Connect
1.	
2.	
3.	
4.	
5.	

**Strategy 3** – Identify potential challenges and triggers, so you can plan. You did this on the previous page. Presented on page 7 are some common strategies that others use to deal with the winter/holiday season.

**Strategy 4** – Commit to doing at least one wellness-oriented activity every day of the winter period. Write it down on the calendar below.

December, 2012						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2	3	4	5	6	7	8
9	10	11	12	13	14	15
16	17	18	19	20	21	22
23	24	25	26	27	28	29
30	31					

January, 2013						
Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2	3	4	5
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
27	28	29	30	31		

February, 2013

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3	4	5	6	7	8	9
10	11	12	13	14	15	16
17	18	19	20	21	22	23
24	25	26	27	28		

Winter Wellness Wordfind

T B X V M K M N P T N F Y W  
 U S B N S X R H N S O R L I  
 C P I R A F L I H N I I I Y  
 U O W B U M M I K L T E M A  
 U P O W E R W A L K A N A V  
 U C H K E H H O G Z T D F I  
 Q M R P I O K N N E I S X S  
 Q O P R L N I S B S D F C U  
 D E L I G I G S G N E Y G A  
 P H D T K S H Q L U M X T R  
 P A F S Y V A I P F J G G H  
 Y C J G S E I T R A P O Y I  
 G F F Y H M K O Z W A N Y X  
 Q W L X G M N G V G Z R D R

- Cooking
- Family
- Friends
- Holiday
- Meditation
- Parties
- Peppermint
- Powerwalk
- Skiing

- Snowman

### Some Ideas

#### **Diet and Nutrition:**

- Eat several small meals so that you are not starving when it comes time to eat a holiday feast.
- Drink water before your meal so that you get full faster.
- Watch portions. Aim to eat mostly vegetables and fruit on your plate and opt out of breads and biscuits.
- Opt for water instead of soda, alcoholic beverages, or caffeinated drinks.
- Be aware that many of us get less fresh fruit and vegetables during winter months – look for healthy ways to replace these vital nutrients.

#### **Physical Activity and Environment:**

- Walk around a mall with friends
- Join an exercise class or fitness group in the community
- Clean your living area
- Enjoy outdoor winter activities
- Exercise extra care to prevent slips and other winter injuries, and make sure that kids and elders do the same

#### **Health Care:**

- Practice good prevention for colds and flu such as frequent hand washing
- If you follow self-management for a chronic health condition, don't let holiday events, meals, travel, etc. let you get derailed

#### **Family, Friends, and Supporters:**

- Consider who in your support network is a positive supporter and who might be unhealthy for you
- Decide on how much socialization time you need in order to feel well
- Make holiday get-togethers a positive opportunity to renew acquaintances with family and friends you may not see or speak with very often
- Make attempts to “give back” whenever possible

#### **Finances:**

- Plan ahead in terms of spending and know your limits
- Consider ways to give gifts other than spending money

#### **Rest/Relaxation:**

- Know your limits and plan ahead for proper balance of sleep, relaxation, and activity
- Try to get enough sleep/rest each night, and avoid oversleeping during the winter months

#### **Spiritual:**

- Attend spiritual gatherings and celebrate in the holiday season
- Find ways to express gratitude each day

#### **Expressive Arts:**

- Art can be a great way to express yourself during the holidays
- Consider attending a museum or holiday light show
- Attend a play with a holiday theme
- Think about combining friends/family and expressive arts – do a project or go to a show with some of the kids (young and old) in your life.