

# Your Health



# Boost your Mental Health

According to the National Institute of Mental Health, seasonal affective disorder is a type of depression that comes and goes with the seasons.

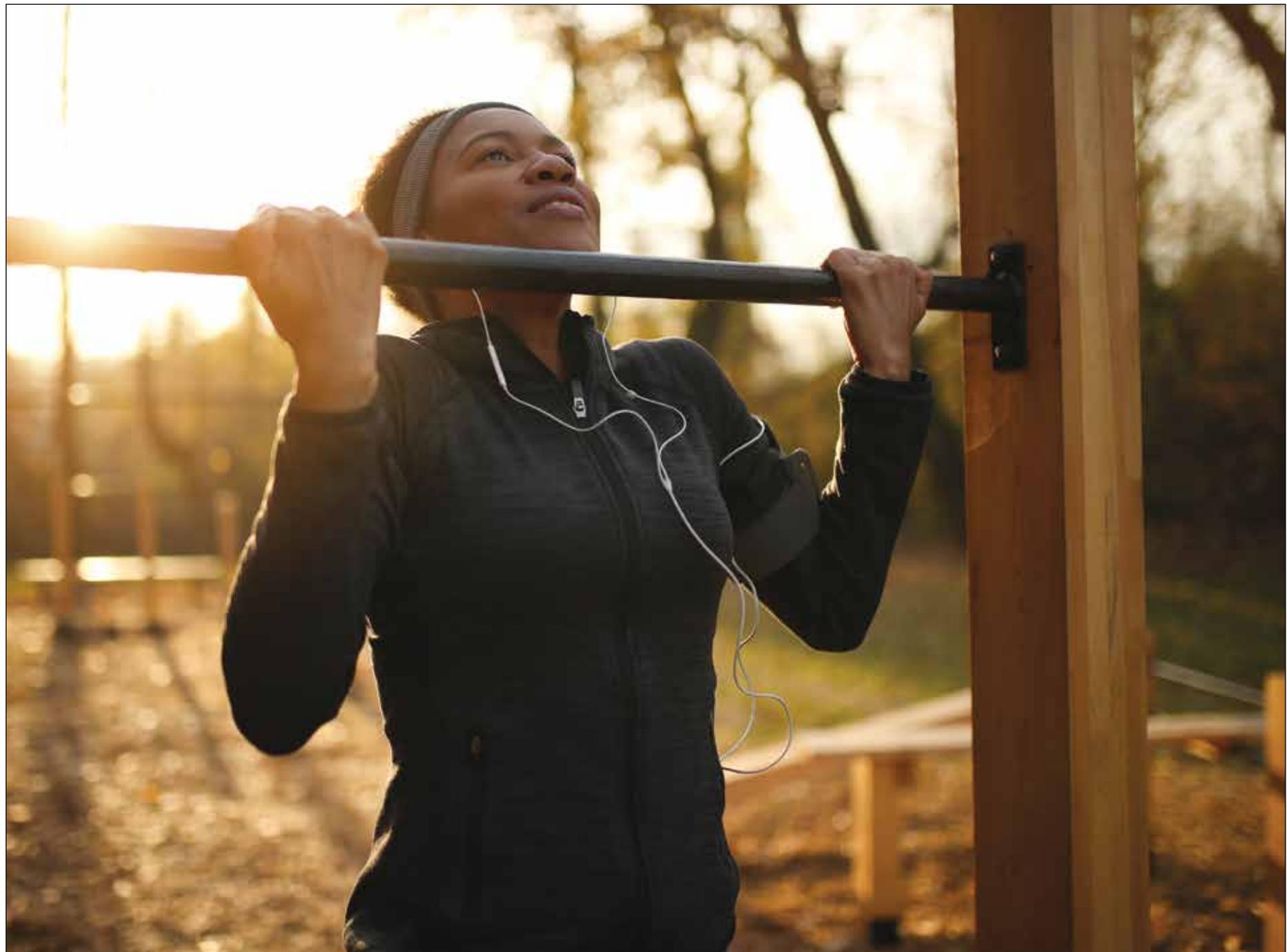
Starting in the late fall and early winter and going away during the spring and summer. For most, mental health can be even tougher during the winter months but there are ways you can help build your confidence and beat the blues.

## **RUN IN THE COLD**

Your motivation and drive to workout drop with the temperature during the winter and fall months. Running during the winter can help boost your confidence and help you realize you are much stronger than you think you are. Keeping up with a normal schedule can help you fight off the winter blues. Most people stop and hibernate during the winter months which can create some symptoms of depression. Keep yourself moving with workouts, setting goals and challenges for yourself.

## **FIND AN INSPIRING QUOTE OR A SONG**

Words can be powerful and very motivating if you find the right words to motivate you. Find an inspiring quote or mantra that you can repeat to



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yourself when days or workouts get difficult.

Find a song to empower you through the tough days. Create various playlist for yourself during different situations. For example, create a playlist of songs that give you energy for your workout or songs that relax you and help you focus on reading.

## **CREATE GOALS**

Creating goals for yourself to accomplish can help build moral and confidence in yourself when you are at your low points. If you don't workout often start out with simple goals such as running half a mile or wake up every morning at 8 a.m. Your goals can even be something as

simple as portioning your food better, losing five pounds or doing 10 push-ups every morning. Use your goals to slowly build your confidence and mental toughness.

## **DON'T MAKE EXCUSES**

Winter and fall depression can get to you at times and

even motivate you to make excuses to keep you from working out. Discipline yourself and maintain that discipline.

The best way to maintain your discipline is to just get up and do it. Create your goals, find your inspiration and stop making excuses for yourself.

# Family Health History

It is important to know your family health history to keep record of disease and health conditions passed down in your genes. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention shares tips to help you collect your family history.

## HOW TO COLLECT MY FAMILY HEALTH HISTORY

Collecting your family health history may seem like a difficult task to complete but it can be as easy as asking family at family gatherings.

Collect information from all of the family members that you can about health conditions or diseases that they or past family members have had. You'll want to include information on major conditions, causes of death, age at diagnosis and ethnic background.

Talk to your doctor about all the information you have acquired about your family. Even if you don't have the whole history, at least you have a starting point for tests to screen.

## WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Family health history is important because most families have history of at least one chronic disease such as cancer, heart disease or diabetes. If you have a family member



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with a disease, then more than likely you or your children can possibly have the disease.

Having your family health history can help you adjust your life and health habits early so that you can lead the healthiest life you can. The CDC says that healthy living habits can reduce your risk for

diseases that run in your family. Screening tests, such as blood sugar testing, mammograms and colorectal cancer screening, help identify early signs of disease.

## PLANNING PREGNANCY

If you or your partner are planning pregnancy, knowing

both of your family's health histories would be beneficial to you and your partner. Check with your family to know ahead of time if there are any history of complications in pregnancy such as birth defects, developmental disability, or new born screening disorder. If those disease do

run in your family there is a high chance that you could have a baby with these diseases. Screen tests for both potential parents and not just the mom. Talk to your doctor about your health history to find out what tests and treatment options you have before getting pregnant.

# Work Out from Home

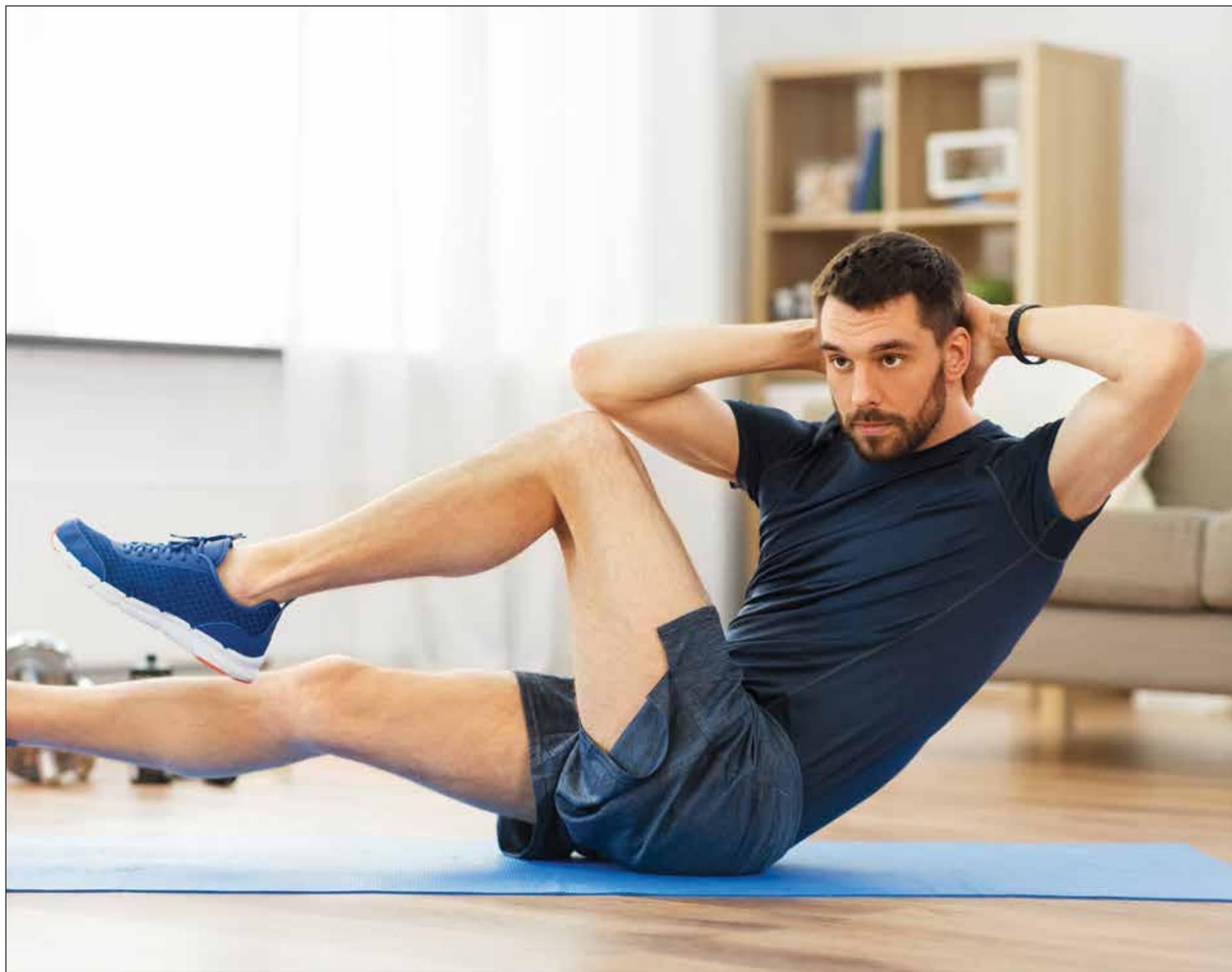
If you are looking to get your workout and cardio in but the chilled and possibly unsafe weather of the fall and winter months is stopping you, invest in workout equipment that can be used indoors.

You can get equipment such as rubber weights, resistance bands and a stationary bike.

Workout safely from home. The colder weather of fall and winter can be too dangerous for you to travel to a gym and may be too cold for you to workout outside or in your backyard. You don't need a lot of space to workout from home, clear a coffee table in your living room and place a mat on the floor. Start your home gym simple with a yoga mat, a couple of small dumbbells and a step stool.

## STATIONARY BIKE

Cardio workouts such as stationary bikes are a good home workout for both beginners and experienced gym heads. You can find stationary bikes at any of your local sports and outdoors stores. Stationary bikes can help your body in a variety of ways such as improving memory and brain functioning, lower blood pressure and help you get better sleep. Stationary bikes can aid in weight loss and are an



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excellent workout for burning calories and body fat.

## DUMBBELL WEIGHTS

If you are looking to get a little more from your workout than to just burn calories then investing in dumbbells would be a good option for you.

Dumbbells can be stored easily and basically anywhere if you have enough space to fit them under a bed or in your closet. You can workout various muscle groups in your body with dumbbells. If you are new to working out then start with light weight dumb-

bells and work your way up with more weight as you progress and become stronger.

## RESISTANCE BANDS

Resistance bands are an excellent option for you if you live in a small or studio apartment and don't have space to

store dumbbells or a stationary bike. Like the dumbbells, resistance bands can be used to workout multiple muscle groups. Resistance bands are used primarily for leg workouts but can be used to workout your arms and even your chest.



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# Boost your Immune System

The immune system uses antibodies, cells and other things to help your body fight off harmful germs and infections that enter your body.

Wearing protective equipment can protect yourself from some harmful germs and viruses but they might still find their way to you.

Infections and germs spread from person to person via droplets sneezed or coughed in the air, or by mucus that gets onto your hands and surfaces. Germs and infections getting into your body may be inevitable, but there are precautions you can take to boost your immune system.

## LIVE A HEALTHY LIFESTYLE

Many products claim they can boost your immunity but that makes little sense scientifically. Your immune system is made up of many cells that respond to a variety of different germs and microbes in your body. The body is constantly creating immune cells and producing too many may be harmful for the good bacteria and cells in your body. The immune system requires balance and harmony to function properly.

Living a healthy lifestyle can help to keep your immune system strong and healthy.

## HEALTHY CHOICES

As we said before there are no remedies or over the counter products that can provenly increase your immune system. Your immune system requires balance and healthy lifestyle choices to function properly. If you wish to boost or maintain your immune health then you should choose healthier lifestyle choices such as not smoking, eating a diet high in fruits and vegetables, maintaining a healthy weight, wash hands frequently and exercising regularly.

## FACTS OF IMMUNE HEALTH

Ginseng and echinacea may actually be one of the few remedies that may help to improve immune health. People try other products such as probiotics to boost immune health and supplementing the friendly bacteria in your body may be helpful, but scientists are still learning what may truly be effective in increasing your immune health. Sometimes taking too much vitamins C, probiotics or immune products can be harmful to your body. Scientists have seen that maintaining a healthy lifestyle will get you the right amount of vitamins you need in your body.

# Sleep Matters

When it comes to your immune health, sleep can play an important role in how your immune system performs.

Getting too much sleep doesn't seem like it will prevent you from getting sick, but too little sleep has shown to negatively affect a person's immune system. Making sure you get good quality sleep during the winter months can help give you a better fighting chance against the cold or flu.

## CYTOKINE PRODUCTION AND SLEEP

The Sleepfoundation.org says that, without sufficient sleep, your body makes fewer cytokines, a type of protein that targets infection and inflammation, effectively creating an immune response. Cytokines are produced and released during sleep; if you aren't sleeping you're losing out.

The Sleep Foundation recommends getting at least seven to eight hours of sleep to avoid getting sick and staying healthy. Sleeping seven to eight hours a night will also help from other health issues including heart disease, diabetes and obesity.

## NAPS ARE THE BEST

If you are a health care worker or work in a profession that works nights, long hours or odd shifts and you feel you aren't getting adequate sleep



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then naps are the best next thing for you. The Sleep Foundation says taking two naps that are no longer than 30 minutes each – one in the morning and one in the afternoon – has been shown to help decrease stress and offset the negative effects that sleep deprivation has on the

immune system. If you are unable to sleep for a half-hour during the workday, sleep for 20 minutes during your lunch break and another right before you eat dinner.

## WHAT MAKES YOU SLEEP

Good sleep is important to your health and immune

health. If you find yourself having a hard time falling asleep, there are some tricks and things you can do to help you fall asleep.

Lowering the temperature in your bedroom can help you fall asleep. Your body temperature changes and cools when you lie down. Setting your room

temperature between 60-67 degrees could help.

Another way to help you fall asleep is by making your room completely dark and turning on some relaxing music. Research has shown that darkness boosts the production of melatonin, the hormone essential for sleep.

# Cold Weather Diet

The cold season drives people inside their homes. While you're there, it can be easy to snack more than you usually would.

Eat a protein-packed breakfast in the mornings to fill your stomach and keep you from feeling hungry later on during the day. If you do get hungry, buy healthy snacks. Snacks like granola bars can be a sweet and full of protein option for you.

## ADD OMEGA 3 FATTY ACIDS

Food like fish, plant seeds and nuts are full of omega 3. Omega 3 is the healthy type of fat that can help reduce joint pain and stiffness. Studies conducted have shown that it can also help lower levels of depression. Omega 3 can be especially beneficial in more ways than one for you during the winter months. Add these types of foods to your winter diet plan to help you stay healthy and happy.



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## WORKOUT AT HOME

Traveling to a gym can be dangerous during the winter months depending on what part of the country you live in. You don't need to set up a complete home gym to get a good workout at home. You can find dumbbells at your

local sports and outdoors store to workout with at home in your living room. Purchase other items like weight bands and a medicine ball to help you get a complete workout and to stay in shape at home during the winter months.

## COOK WITH HEALTHY FOODS

Eating healthy can be difficult during the cold weather of fall and winter because people are more tempted to stay home sheltered from the chilled air. Eating healthy can be easy if you change your

mindset when shopping for groceries and food to eat.

Meal prepping is one of the best and most affordable ways to eat healthy. Meal prep with foods high in protein like chicken, fish and other meats. When you meal prep, you have full control of

what goes in your body.

Cut up fresh vegetable and cook all your meat once a week to make sure you have food that will last you all week. The best cold weather food to eat are broth-based soups high in protein and in vegetables.

# Flu Season

With fall and winter fast approaching, there are steps and precautions you and your family will need to take to fight the flu. Here is some advice from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on fighting the flu this fall season.

## GET VACCINATED

According to the CDC, the best step you can take to prevent influenza and its potentially serious complications is getting a yearly flu vaccine. It is true the flu vaccines vary in how well they work, most having about a 65% success rate.

Still, flu vaccines prevent millions of illnesses, tens of thousands of hospitalizations and thousands of deaths every season. Vaccination can help protect women during pregnancy and can also help to protect the infant during the first several months after birth. Vaccinations can also help to protect others around you, more importantly those who are vulnerable and have compromised immune systems such as babies, young children and older people.

## HIGH RISK

The CDC says children younger than 5, especially those younger than 2, have a high risk of flu complications.

People with chronic health conditions such as asthma, heart disease, chronic lung disease and neurodevelopmental conditions are the most high risk of flu complications. Getting your vaccine shot can help to protect them from contracting the flu.

Other high risk groups are adults 65 years and older, as changes in the immune system due to increasing age create more problems. People 65 years and older bear the greatest burden of severe flu disease. The CDC says people 65 years and older bear the greatest burden of severe flu disease.

Between 70% and 85% of seasonal flu-related deaths have occurred in people 65 years and older, and between 50% and 70% of seasonal flu-related hospitalizations have occurred among people in this age group.

## PREVENTATIVE ACTIONS

Other than the flu shot, there are preventative actions that you can take to reduce the spread of flu and stop the spread of germs. The CDC avoids close contact with people who are sick. If you are sick, limit contact with others as much as possible to keep from infecting them.

Cover coughs and sneezes with a tissue and throw away the tissue after you use it. Wash your hands often with soap and water. If you are unable to wash your hands, use an alcohol-based hand rub. Avoid touching your eyes, nose and mouth. Germs spread this way.

