

# Mental Wellness in a Pandemic Winter

Sometimes our mental health can suffer during the winter months. COVID-19 is making it even harder to get through the lack of sunshine and cold weather here in NYS. Here are some tips that might make your pandemic winter a little brighter.

1

**Plan ahead to keep yourself occupied.** Imagine yourself moving through the next few weeks. What do you want to be doing? Get some supplies or set up your space to get yourself started.

2

**Move your body every day.** Staying active can boost your mental wellness. Set a goal that works for you; like 10 minutes of dancing or getting a certain number of steps in each day.

3

**Improve your mood with fresh air and sunshine.** Bundle up and get outside every day. Consider getting snowshoes, a sled, or whatever else might make it fun to get outdoors

- You can always take a brisk walk to keep yourself warm.

4

**Reach out to someone every day.** Staying connected is so important for your mental health.

- Ideas to Connect:**
- Collaborative playlists
  - Phone calls
  - Online forums
  - Care packages
  - Mailing a postcard
  - Online games
  - Virtual hangouts
  - Cook together on Zoom
  - Watch parties
  - If you don't have anyone in your life to reach out to, call a local nursing home and ask if you can send a letter

5

**Do something for someone else.** When you are feeling down, acts of service can be uplifting. Consider volunteering for a cause, knitting for a homeless shelter, or making a meal for a neighbor who is overwhelmed.

6

**Try something new.** When you've been in the same routine for nearly a year, your brain benefits from doing something out of the ordinary. Need some fun, new ideas?

- Break out the tent and camp in the living room.
- Celebrate an un-birthday!
- Dress up for a fancy night in.
- Pick a new album and listen to the whole thing in an afternoon.
- Celebrate a holiday from another time of the year (Fourth of July burgers and buns!).
- Try a new type of exercise activity.
- Organize a mini-golf game, scavenger hunt, or Olympics at your home.

7

**Don't forget your basic self-care.** Make sure you get enough sleep. Eat nutritious food and drink enough water. These go a long way in helping you stay emotionally well.

8

**Get enough light during the day.** If you can't get outside, hang out in sunny rooms. If your living or working space is dark, consider getting a light therapy lamp.



9

**Remind yourself the end is in sight!** Scientists and public health officials are optimistic that much of the population can be vaccinated in 2021. Start thinking about something you want to do once things are safe again—like traveling or a special family reunion. Looking forward to an experience can give you as much of a mood boost as the actual experience.

10

**Reach out for help.** It's okay to feel overwhelmed and burnt out right now. Admitting things feel tough and talking about it can help. Visit [NYProjectHope.org](https://www.nyprojecthope.org).

**NY Project Hope Emotional Support Helpline**

8 am - 10 pm, 7 days a week

**1-844-863-9314**