

FUEL UP WARM UP

MOVING FOR WARMTH

As the nights draw in and the temperature drops, it can be tempting to hang up the trainers and swap for your slippers. But exercising throughout the winter months is hugely beneficial to the body and mind, helping you to;

Banish the seasonal winter blues

Symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) – low mood, fatigue and loss of interest in daily activities throughout the winter months – are improved with regular physical activity

Reduce stress and improve mood

Physical activity and moving your body is proven to be the best way to deal with stress for both mind and body, and the production of “feel-good” endorphins can give you the mental lift we all need on a grey day

Increase energy levels and improve sleep

Which will help make it a little easier to get out of bed on the dark, cold mornings

Support and strengthen your immune system

Regular exercise benefits the body's defence systems too, reducing the risk of catching those seasonal coughs, colds and flu

Maintain a healthy weight -

SAD may also lead to an increased appetite – exercising can help you to manage your weight

Get outside to exercise whenever you can – although we struggle to make enough Vitamin D throughout the winter due to reduced sunlight exposure, it is still crucial for our health – Vitamin D is key for strong bones and muscle function, as well as boosting the immune system (goodbye, common cold). Strong bones + muscle function = better physical performance and ability to maintain activity levels.

A walk outside can help cure cabin-fever and break up long periods of time spent indoors. The fresh (brisk) air can help regain some mental clarity - Taking 15 minutes away from your desk or workplace is proven to reduce stress and promote mental wellbeing – so pull on your jacket and get moving for a more positive and productive day.

If you'd rather not brave the cold, head to the gym – going with a buddy or going to classes will help to keep you accountable when you feel your motivation may be slipping.

No gym membership? No problem, pop in a workout DVD or stream one of the millions of online videos featuring everything from dance routines to yoga and Pilates.

Top Tip – When exercising in the colder winter months, ensure you always warm up effectively and thoroughly beforehand, especially if exercising outdoors. Cold muscles are at a greater risk for strains and injuries - incorporate a dynamic and light aerobic warm up that increases blood flow, gets your muscles supple and warm, and gradually increases your heartrate. A dynamic warm up includes active movements that take your body through ranges of motion, to prepare the entire body and mind for exercise, improving coordination and better execution of the exercise you plan to do. Try exercises such as lunge-and-twists, knee-hugs, jogging/on the spot, and star jumps, gradually increasing the intensity over 5-8 minutes.

If you liked this blog follow us on



@_healthyforlife



@Healthyforlife_ne

For all of our wellbeing blogs created fortnightly by Aramark Dietitians and Nutritionists.