

Winter Wellbeing Advent Calendar 2024



🔍 = keywords to find further information online via popular search engines (clickable links in the digital PDF version)



Rest and Relax • Rest is vital for better mental health, increased concentration and memory, a healthier immune system, reduced stress, improved mood and even a better metabolism. Start by finding a relaxation technique that works for you. This could be meditating, practicing yoga, walking outside, listening to music, reading a book, taking a bath or any combination of these things.



Get musical • Research has shown that various forms of music, playing instruments or singing can be a benefit for mental health. It has been shown to relieve tension, and lower stress and anxiety levels. And why not make it social by joining a singing group such as the very informal and fun 'Sing A-Long and Social' in Marlborough – **Contact Anna on 07852 191378** for more details.



Try writing a journal • Keeping a journal (or journaling) is recognised as an effective way to help with depression and anxiety, focus your mind, and reduce stress. It can be a useful way to take a step back and assess how loneliness is making you feel, how you treat yourself when you're feeling this way, and where to go from where you're currently at. For some useful guidance: 🔍 [helpguide.org](https://www.helpguide.org)



Do a random act of kindness • Studies show that the quickest way to get a mood boost is to do a small good deed for others, like holding the door open, buying a coffee for a stranger or offering to take a neighbour's dog for a walk. Bumping into others walking dogs can often be a great way of starting a new connection. For inspiration and ideas: 🔍 [random act of kindness](#)



Wrap up warm and go for a wintery walk • Any type of exercise can be great for our mental health and there are still ways to keep active over the wintery months. Wrap up warm and go for a walk – even if it is around the block. And make it a social thing by joining one of the many Ramblers Wellbeing Walks: 🔍 [ramblers wellbeing walks](#)



Join a social get-together with like-minded people • Sometimes it's about finding a group of peers that have similar interests or experiences. For example, the Happy Café's (with the Action for Happiness ethos) could be great for finding support for those struggling with their mental health. For more info visit: 🔍 [rethink wiltshire inclusion](#) or 🔍 [action for happiness](#)



Try to eat healthily • Eating habits often change with the seasons, and in winter we tend to crave more sumptuous, hearty meals. It can be nice to treat yourself but remember to continue to eat a balanced diet with some fruit and vegetables along the way. If you are wishing to lose weight then check out the advice on the NHS Better Health website: 🔍 [nhs better health](#)



Get creative • Creative activities can help us feel more relaxed and happier so why not try taking up a new project or hobby - knitting, reading or a jigsaw puzzle for example. Slowing down and focusing on something like this can help take us away from our anxieties. Check out the following BBC website for ideas to fuel your creativity: 🔍 [bbc arts get creative](#)



Listen to a Podcast • Listening to podcasts can help to reduce stress and anxiety, provide emotional support, and gain new perspectives on life. There are a variety of podcasts available on various platforms to suit many tastes. Why not consider the 'Let's Talk: Mental Health' series from the Mental Health Foundation: 🔍 [mental health foundation podcasts](#)



Keep to a routine, pattern or schedule • Having a pattern to your day or week can help provide some familiarity which can help manage any seasonal changes or significant events at this time of year. With some of these wellbeing tips for example – volunteering, a meet-up at a Happy Café – can help provide structure to our day and weeks. Check out this advice: 🔍 [verywell mind routine](#)



Connect online • Social media can be a great way to connect with others. With so many internet-based groups and forums available, there can be numerous opportunities to connect with others with similar interests. One example is the 🔍 [#JoinIn sarah millican](#), run by comedian, Sarah Millican. This is aimed at people on their own at Christmas who would like to connect with others.



Get a good night's sleep • There are an incredible number of ways in which sleep can improve your wellbeing. Research shows that the benefits of a good night's sleep can help lower the likelihood of depression and other mental disorders; and will also give you more positive energy to face social engagements. Every Mind Matters has some useful tips: 🔍 [every mind matters sleep better](#)



13

Connect with nature • Connecting with nature can improve your sense of wellbeing and reduce feelings of loneliness. For example, you could plant some vegetables in your garden or get some indoor plants to tend to. Also, you can join others outdoors and join a volunteer group that looks after green spaces, for example: Meadowbrook in Melksham: [meadowbrook wiltshire](#)



14

Use social media wisely • Although being online brings many benefits it can also bring many stresses. Create some useful digital habits such as setting some digital free time, turning off notifications, not having tech at the dinner table or in the bedroom. Check out the following article for more useful tips: [14 digital wellbeing tips](#)



15

Start a new course, class or club • As well as learning something new being healthy for us, joining a course can be another opportunity to meet like-minded people or those following a similar interest to you. Visit [wiltshire together](#) for events and groups in your area, or try Wiltshire College pages for various courses on offer: [wiltshire adult learning](#)



16

Volunteer for a charity • Giving is one of the recognised 5 ways to wellbeing, so look into volunteering opportunities near you. For example, at this time of year, and especially with the cost of living, there can be an increased demand on Foodbanks. So why not help support the great work the Trussell Trust do: [trussell volunteer](#)



17

Join a warm space for some company and a hot drink • With the winter weather setting in (and to help with the cost of living) there are numerous venues – such as Wiltshire Libraries - offering a warm space. Join for a free place to sit, stay and take part in activities on offer, as well as a hot beverage where available. To find local warm spaces visit: [warm welcome spaces](#)



18

Try laughter yoga • Laughter itself boosts people's health, communication, positive thinking and creativity. Laughter Yoga is a unique form of exercise that combines intentional laughter with yoga breathing techniques. Search on YouTube for plenty of videos to follow or visit the Calm website for further guidance: [calm laughter yoga](#)



19

Have a tidy • No need to wait till the spring, decluttering can help produce a great sense of achievement. Why not get rid of old clothes, books, etc, either sending items to the charity shop or selling them online. Find some helpful decluttering tips here: [good housekeeping decluttering](#)



20

Drink sensibly • Being mindful of how much alcohol you drink can have a positive impact on your mental health. Alcohol is a depressant, which means that while it might help you relax in the moment, it can affect your mood and sleep in the long term. Drinking plenty of water is good for our health at anytime. Check the Humankind website for further tips: [human kind safe drinking](#)



21

Be around animals • Some people find that spending time around animals can help with feelings of loneliness. For example, a great local charity is Dogs for Health who you can join for one of their Walk and Talk group – they provide the dogs! [dogs for health walk talk](#)



22

Remember you are not alone with loneliness • If you are alone this Christmas, remind yourself that there will be others who are also alone or in similar situation. Making an effort to reach out and connect with others may well boost their spirits as well as yours. Whether it's a video call, phone call, sending a Christmas card or a text message – there are plenty of ways to get, and stay, in touch. Why not consider becoming a Telephone Befriending Volunteer for Age UK: [age uk befriending](#)



23

Increase exposure to natural light • During the winter months, our exposure to natural light can be limited. Evidence shows that 20 minutes around midday even when overcast can be beneficial. If you're not able to get out, then try to make your home as light and airy as possible and sit near a window. The NHS site has more information on Seasonal Affective Disorder: [nhs sad](#)



24

Don't hesitate to say no to social invites that feel too much • Don't feel obliged to join every social event or accept every invitation. It is useful to recognise where your energy comes from – internally or externally. Recognise that if your battery feels empty then you might need some quiet time to recharge. Check out the following for some advice on saying no: [betterup say no](#)



25

Indulge yourself • Sometimes Christmas can be a challenging time for a lot of reasons. The best present you can give yourself is to prioritise your wellbeing! Don't feel guilty about buying that something you've always wanted or doing that bit of self-care that you need. Don't forget to visit YOU and YOURSELF!

Season's Greetings from the Wiltshire Mental Health Inclusion Service



rethink.org/wiltsmhis



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