Winter Wellness Tips

Just because it's cold outside doesn't mean you have to hibernate. Here are some tips for staying physically and emotionally healthy this winter season.

Raise your vitamin D levels naturally
We’ve all heard about the marvels of vitamin D: heart health, skin health, immune health, mental health... But, you don’t need to supplement or risk skin cancer to get high vitamin D levels. The big secret is to eat your greens. Greek yogurt is a delicious and healthy snack that is rich in vitamin D levels and is associated with healthy lifespan changes. For example, if you lose just 5 percent or more of your body weight, your vitamin D blood levels will shoot up. Vitamin D lacks to be in fair shape; so when you lose fat, the D levels in your blood go up. Other reasons to increase D naturally are to boost your cholesterol, exercise, and eat more fatty fish, such as wild salmon.

Other good food sources are trout, tuna, mackerel, egg yolks and plain Greek yogurt.

Eat nuts and vegetables — the ones that are sources of omega-3 fatty acids.
One of the primary omega-3 fatty acids, called alpha-linolenic acid (ALA), is found in many plants and plant-based cooking oils. Vegetable high in ALA include broiled sprouts and cilantro. Flaxseed or oil, chia seeds and walnuts are especially good sources of ALA. Recent research suggests that omega-3s have anti-inflammatory effects, can protect your brain as well as some cardiovascular disease prevention and, perhaps, even some impacts on mental health. For example, an 18-year Harvard Nurses' Health Study of almost 77,000 women found a reduced risk of depression in those with moderate intake of plant-based omega-3 fatty acids.

Fruits and vegetables — the ones that are sources of omega-3 fatty acids

To find out more about conferences and their partners, visit the Alpha-1 Foundation website: www.alpha1.org or call toll-free: (888) 825-7421, ext. 351.

Take a class with a friend
Winter can be a rough time for many of us. All that darkness can take its toll on our mental and physical health. Plus, having social activities that don’t do you in isolation, and the winter months can be very isolating for many people. To keep the winter blues at bay, sign up for yoga, cooking, sewing or scrapbooking class with a friend. Not only do these classes improve your mental and physical fitness, but they help fill that socializing that we have a human being, too.

Exercise
It is amazing how much more overwhelming things can seem when you are tired. A good night’s sleep (or nap!) rejuvenates, helps reduce stress and keeps your immune system in fighting shape. While there is no “magic pill,” taking steps to get the recommended 21 days.

For Your Information...
Your AlphaNet Coordinator is a great resource, whether you are a newly diagnosed Alpha or a long-time AlphaNet subscriber. Take advantage of his/her expertise.

Check out the “Questions to Ask Your Coordinator” pamphlet and other FAQs at www.alpha1planet.org.

Alpha Builds Custom Scooter to Aid Mobility
Alpha Calvin Neumann isn’t letting the hilly terrain around his Winston-Salem, North Carolina home stop him from moving about town. In fact, thanks to a little ingenuity and a lot of dedication, Calvin is maintaining an active lifestyle with the help of his custom-built mobility scooter.

Cal, who is 76 years old and a self-proclaimed “car nut,” decided to build a custom scooter using the experience he had gained restoring several classic cars in the past.

“I decided a couple of years ago to build my own mobility scooter in the shape of a 1903 currad Oldsmobile,” Neumann said.

The process of building the scooter proved to be intensive, as Cal had to obtain his materials from many sources. “The shop project took some time, with everything from a spoked bicycle wheel to a hand-built frame, suspension and more.”

Cal chose to use mostly recycled materials on his scooter and he points out that there are only a few parts that are ‘new’ on his Calmobile” — the name he has given his scooter. “The motors and batteries are from a donated power wheelchair and the rest are handmade or custom modified,” Cal noted.

Cal, a ZZ whose FEV1 level is about 33%, finds that his Calmobile has given him increased mobility, provided that he lives in a hilly region and can no longer maintain climbing or even walk, the hills taking his North Carolina Peace home.

“I use my scooter as much as I can. I can climb the hills here, so visiting my family and neighbors and getting to the grocery store at the corner are now easy, as well as fun,” Cal said.

While Cal may not be able to climb mountains anymore, he certainly isn’t letting his Alpha stand in the way of his passion for building and restoring cars and exploring his beautiful North Carolina neighborhood.

It seems evident that Cal won’t be slowing down anytime soon due to his trusty Calmobile to get him around town!
New Year, New You: Nutrition Guide for Alphas

The start of the new year is the perfect time to revamp your dietary habits and eliminate unhealthy foods from your daily routine. Below are some recommendations for nutritious eating that are specifically geared toward Alphas:

- Opt for plain yogurt and add your own fruit or fiber (such as slivered almonds or rolled oats).
- Keep a food diary for a week to see what you are actually eating.
- More efficient eating: Try primrose oil, borage oil or a combination of oils available in most pharmacies and health food stores.
- Fish oil is a natural anti-inflammatory, which can assist with easing the inflammation associated with chronic lung disease. If you can’t tolerate fish oil, substitutes may include flaxseed oil, evening primrose oil, or a combination of oils. These oils work because they are rich in Omega 3 fatty acids, which the body converts to the anti-inflammatory compound called eicosanoids. Fish oil helps your body produce these chemicals.
- Limit refined foods and sugars. Examples include: white rice, white bread, mashed potatoes, pasta made from white flour and anything labeled “trans fat.” Reducing the intake of these foods means less energy processing for your body, which can result in more energy for breathing.
- Carrots may seem like a strange choice, but these vegetables are rich in antioxidants, fiber, and carotenoids. They help reduce inflammation in the body and provide the body with more energy for breath.
- Avoid fast food — but if you must go, eat the salads with light dressing and grilled chicken.
- Eat whole, fresh foods and avoid processed foods whenever possible.

Alphas: optimizing your nutrition for better health.

Oxygen Considerations When Traveling By Air

When traveling by air, it is important to consider the effects of altitude and oxygen availability on your health.

1. Travel with your oxygen system when traveling by air. Make arrangements for a wheelchair or motorized cart, if needed, at the time of booking. This will ensure easy transport through the airport from check-in to the security gates, baggage claim and final ground transportation.

2. Confirm your travel itinerary with your aviation provider. Additional confirmation that oxygen has been ordered is recommended for each segment of your air travel. Verify one week in advance and, again, 48 hours prior to travel.

3. If you require oxygen for any portion of your travel, please ensure that you have your oxygen prescription, oxygen equipment, and oxygen source (oxygen concentrator or oxygen tank) on hand. Your oxygen provider will provide you with the necessary documentation and instructions for traveling on a plane.

4. This is a helpful website for locating airline seats with power outlets when traveling with a Portable Oxygen Concentrator: www.oxysource.com/articles/seat/location, power, placement, oxygen. Use this site to find oxygen-friendly seats on your final destination.

5. Always consider is what amperage the concentrators draw and whether the particular aircraft provides power for concentrators. It is always best to be aware of this beforehand, but with delays that happen without warning, this is a way to have some measure of oxygen that you won’t lose on air.