

## **Top Tips for Staying Well through Autumn and Winter**

We asked a close friend for a top tip for staying well over the colder darker months, the response was: "Wear your warm coat". Good advice. However, we wondered if our practitioners may come up with something else helpful. This is what they said:

### **Sarah Talbot**

Take this turn in the seasons to nurture yourself, to slow down, eat slow-cooked fresh seasonal foods (soups and stews) and enjoy the colourful changes in nature. As the days get shorter and the weather turns colder, we naturally become quieter and turn to different foods. Before artificial light, we would have been going to bed at very near to sunset and not rising til dawn; our bodies are still attuned to this, in fact many of our hormones are governed by light levels.

It is kinder to our bodies and our minds, to go with this seasonal adjustment - to have time for reflection, for quieter pursuits - to give ourselves (mind and body) some time and attention.

Spend time relaxing at home, watching catch-up TV or films...or reading that book....or maybe even writing your own!

### **Karen Butler**

Emotions only live when we attach a story to them and we are very good at doing this with things that cause us distress. When we find ourselves stuck in a negative emotion, open into it; dive into the core of it and ask, "What's deeper than this?" Really welcome each emotion that arises and surround each one with your love and acceptance. Keep going until you open into the vast stillness of your soul. Just rest here, knowing that this is who you truly are.

### **Sarah McConnell**

Here's a tip for couples;

A great idea for couples for the autumn season is to find something to appreciate about each other every day. Get a piece of paper, draw a column for each partner and stick it up somewhere only the couple can see. Each day, find something to write down something in your partner's column that you appreciate about them. This could be something small ("I love that you smiled at me this morning when you woke up") or something they did to help you ("Thank you for doing the dishes last night"), or just something about them that you like ("I really appreciate your sense of humour"). You'll be surprised at how reading what your partner has written about you will keep you warm on cold, dark evenings!

## **Jenny Fox Eades**

Autumn Alexander Tip One:

When it's cold we shorten and tighten our muscles and shrink into our bodies. This makes us no warmer AND it can make us feel tired and even miserable. Try to notice yourself doing this, stop and then smile, imagine warm sunshine on your back instead and look up and out!

Autumn Alexander Tip Two:

Looking down at the ground REALLY doesn't make us any safer when walking around. If anything it makes us less safe because it reduces our field of vision. Try to use your peripheral vision - what you can see from the edges of your field of vision - to take in the ground at your feet AND the path ahead of you. If you must look down, glance down briefly, or even better flick your eyes down without moving your head - and then look up and out again. Looking up and out improves balance AND mood.

## **Kathryn Rogers**

Without the summer sunshine your vitamin D levels begin to fall (along with the leaves!) Vitamin D has an important role in protecting you from developing illness due to infection. So, as well as having plenty of fresh vegetables and fruit every day to support your immune system, taking a vitamin D supplement may also help to keep the winter bugs at bay.

## **Holly Taylor**

Try and see the positives in each and every day.

There are always some positives that can be found even when we are feeling low. Changing how we perceive and think about the winter months can really make a difference.

Example: it's raining which is great as I can have a day off the washing and put my feet up with a cup of tea  
(positives + self care = winning)

## **Helen Madden**

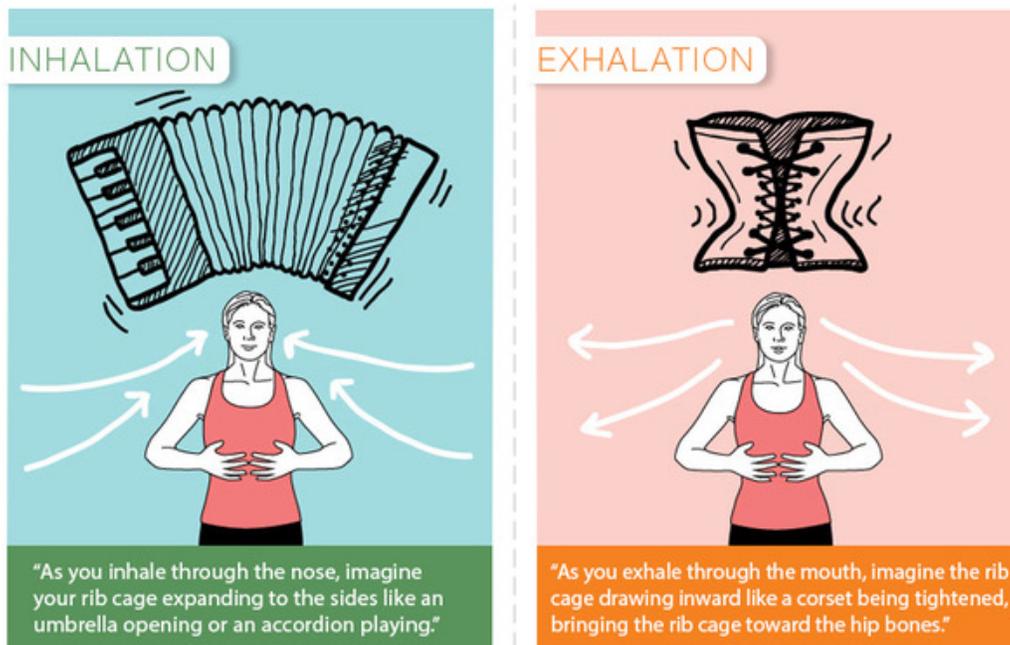
My top tip which I'm sure will be duplicated multiple times is to get outside into the natural light every single day for at least 30 minutes walking or more.

## **Bruna Tamai**

Pilates lateral breathing:

one of the main benefits is that by doing this breathing softly and in a mindful way, not only you help relaxing your thinking mind, but also you can

encourage muscle relaxation especially around the shoulders and chest area, while, at the same time, very lightly activating your deep abdominal muscles. Try this breathing at different times of the day, when doing different activities: walking, sitting reading a book, or watching tv, doing the washing up...



Sources: *Pilates Illustrated*, by Portia Page (Human Kinetics 2011)  
*Pilates Anatomy*, by Rael Isacowitz and Karen Clippinger (Human Kinetics 2011)

### Pecs stretch:

one of the best and simplest exercises to stretch and open the chest & shoulders, while also encouraging some upper back extension. This is a great stretch to counteract the negative effects of spending too much time sitting in front of a computer and/or driving. Do it as often as you can remember and hold it up to 20 secs. As you hold the stretch lightly draw your belly button in and avoid arching your low back arch



### Sandie Nobron-Shaw

1 Don't be too quick to put summer behind you. Slow the transition down by extending summer till you're good and ready to say goodbye. Throw another barbecue, (so what if you have to take shelter under a gazebo!), there's still plenty of summer food and drink available, still plenty of fresh mint for a

Pimms and those outdoor lights and chimineas will look even more delightful against a darker evening sky.

2 Take time to reminisce about your summer antics, to feel grateful for the fun you've had with your friends or family and share your summer snaps with those involved. Photos are one of our greatest memory triggers; you'll instantly recall those precious moments when the summer's warmth wrapped around you and lifted your body and your mind. Add your summer snaps to your computer desktop, to the screen saver on your phone and get copies printed off to display around your home.

3 Start planning your next day-trip and some fun things to do this autumn. Autumn is such a beautiful time of year, all those stunning golden brown colours in the landscape; it's a particularly great time for woodland and forest walks. So pack a flask and a brolly and go kick up some autumn leaves. Cinemas, Art Galleries, Spas, Museums, Heritage Centres, Country Houses, Concert Halls, Coffee Shops and Theatres are all welcoming, vibrant places to visit when the rain can pour down and it matters not a jot.

4 If your mood dips on a particularly dreary evening when you have nothing much to do, see if you can turn your thoughts outwards to those members of our community who might be more apprehensive about the darker evenings than you. Perhaps you know someone who finds it difficult to get out and about at the best of times? Maybe a reassuring chat over a cup of tea would really make their day. Most of us are now aware of the beneficial act of 'giving something back' and the positive effect it can have on both parties involved. Why not inquire at your local volunteer centre to see if there are any interesting projects happening locally which you could get involved with? Or, organise a coffee morning or a catch up with friends you haven't seen in a while. It's possible that they're feeling the post summer blues too, and would love to hear from you.

5 And finally, when you're feeling blue – take extra care of yourself. Most people will experience feeling fed-up at some point at this time of year, and if you do, it's particularly important to take good care of yourself. Eat well; plenty of fresh fruit and vegetables and avoid skipping meals or opting for less energising comfort foods. Take time to exercise; yoga and pilates are great exercise when you don't feel high energy, although some uplifting music and aerobic exercise might be just what you need. Get plenty of fresh air, sleep, rest and relaxation and if your mood still doesn't improve, then please do seek out a friend or professional person to talk to about it, or speak to your GP.