

Your Health

 Health Partners

DECEMBER 2025 NEWSLETTER

WINTER WELLNESS

& Festive Fitness



The festive season is a time for joy, but it can also bring challenges – from financial pressures and indulgent treats to managing stress and staying active during winter’s chill. In this edition, we’ll help you prioritise your wellbeing with tips on affordable gift ideas, managing seasonal stress, staying energised and balancing comfort foods with fitness. Read on to find out how to boost your health, happiness and meaningful moments this season.

Prioritising Financial Wellbeing During the Festive Season

The festive season is often painted as the most wonderful time of the year but for many it can bring a mix of joy and stress. The pressure to buy the perfect gifts, juggling social commitments and keep up with festive traditions can leave your wallet feeling stretched and your stress levels soaring. However, the good news is that celebrating the holidays doesn’t have to mean emptying your bank account.

Financial wellbeing is an essential part of overall health, and with a little planning and creativity, you can enjoy the festive season without breaking the bank. By focusing on thoughtful gestures, meaningful experiences and affordable traditions, you can create a holiday period that is not only kind to your finances but also rich in connection and joy. Here are our top tips on how to prioritise financial wellbeing while staying true to the spirit of the season.

KEEPING THE FESTIVE SPIRIT AFFORDABLE

It’s no secret that the holidays can be hard on the wallet. With the cost of living rising, many are looking for ways to celebrate without breaking the bank. Remember, the season isn’t about how much you spend but about the love, thought and care behind your actions.

Here’s our top tips on how to keep the season affordable:

- ▶ **Set a budget**
Before you start shopping, decide on a realistic budget for gifts, food and activities. Stick to it and try not to be tempted by last-minute splurges.

- ▶ **Embrace DIY**
Homemade gifts add a personal touch and can be even more meaningful than something store-bought. Consider baking festive treats, crafting ornaments or creating a photo album filled with cherished memories.
- ▶ **Secret Santa**
If you’re part of a large family or group of friends, suggest doing a Secret Santa. This way, everyone buys and receives just one gift, reducing costs and stress. You could even agree with the group that everyone will contribute an item they already have but don’t want. This is free and encourages recycling of personally unused items that others might appreciate.
- ▶ **Gift of time**
A heartfelt letter or a promise to spend quality time together can mean far more than material items. You could handwrite coupons for things like ‘A night of babysitting,’ ‘A home-cooked dinner’ or ‘A weekend walk and coffee on me’.

Simple and meaningful gift ideas



If you do want to give physical presents, there are plenty of affordable options that focus on thoughtfulness rather than expense:

- ▶ **Books**
A second-hand book with a personal note inside can be an incredibly thoughtful gift.
- ▶ **Plants**
A small potted plant is a gift that keeps on giving and can brighten up someone’s home.
- ▶ **Wellbeing kits**
Create a mini hamper with items like herbal tea, candles, face masks or a journal – perfect for encouraging relaxation.

The gift of presence

At its heart, the festive season is about connection. Whether it's spending quality time with loved ones, offering a listening ear or simply being there for someone in need, these moments of connection are what make the season truly special.

Here are our top suggestions for bringing people together:

► **Cooking**

Instead of hosting a lavish meal, invite friends or family to cook together or host a 'potluck' where everyone brings a dish. Cooking together can be a fun bonding experience.

► **Walking**

Wrap up warm and head outdoors for a winter walk. Whether it's through a local park or a nearby woodland, it's a lovely way to spend quality time and boost your physical health.

► **Games**

Dig out the board games or organise a trivia quiz. These low-cost activities can lead to hours of laughter and connection.



Managing Stress and Mental Wellbeing

The holidays can leave even the most organised person feeling overwhelmed. Looking at the emotional challenges that may arise such as missing loved ones, financial worries or strained relationships, it becomes clear why mental wellbeing needs to be a top priority during the holidays.

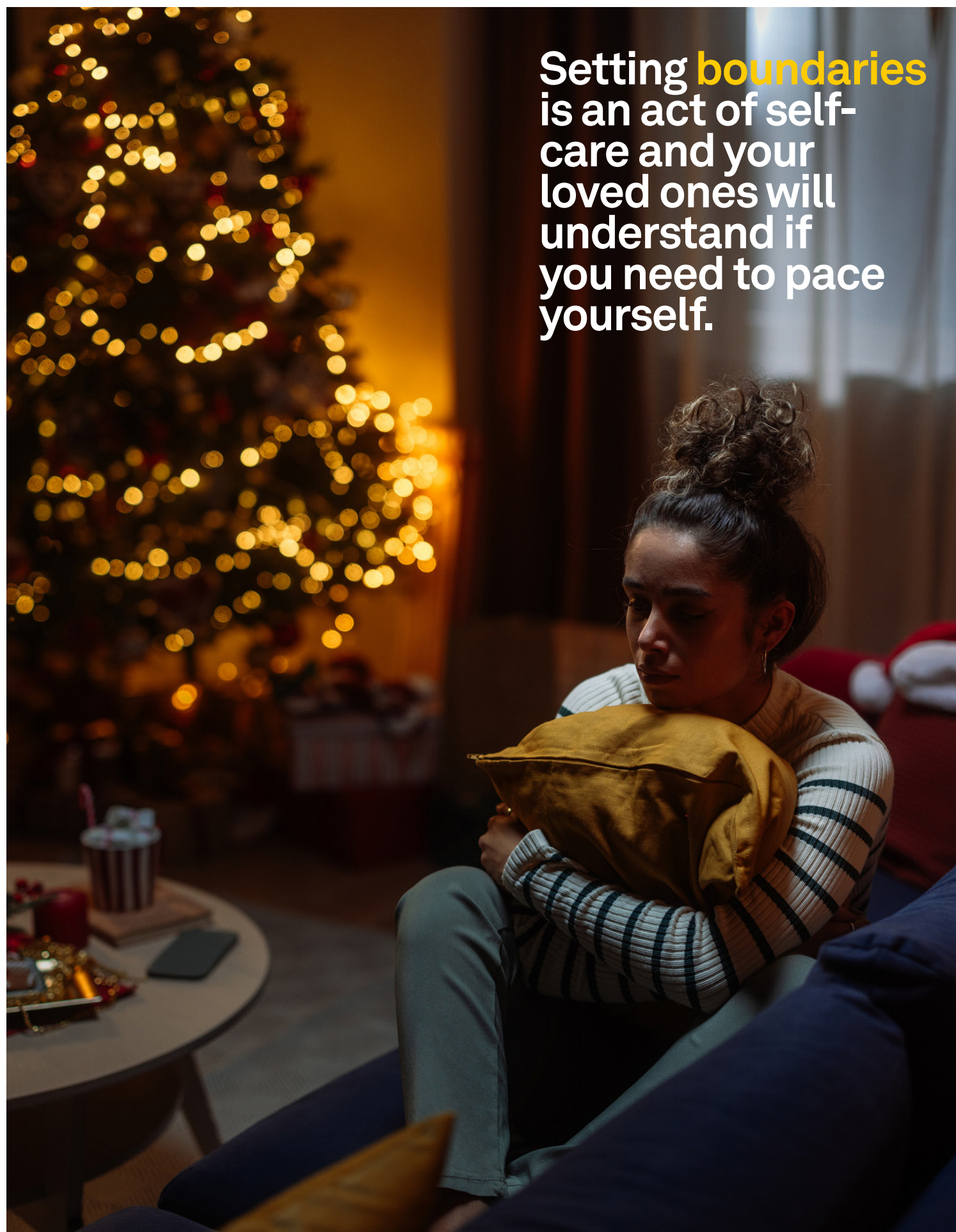
Here are some practical tips to help you manage stress and protect your mental health during this busy time:

- ▶ **Set realistic expectations**
It's easy to get swept up in the idea of creating the 'perfect' holiday, but striving for perfection often leads to unnecessary pressure. Remind yourself that it's okay if everything doesn't go exactly to plan. Whether it's a meal that doesn't turn out perfectly, a gift that's not quite right or plans that have to change, try to focus on the bigger picture: spending time with loved ones and enjoying the moment.
- ▶ **Learn to say no**
While it's lovely to celebrate with others, overcommitting yourself can lead to exhaustion and burnout. Be honest with yourself about how much you can handle and don't be afraid to say no to activities that feel overwhelming. Setting boundaries is an act of self-care and your loved ones will understand if you need to pace yourself.
- ▶ **Take time for yourself**
It's important to carve out moments of solitude to recharge. Whether it's a quiet morning walk, a relaxing bath or simply sitting down with a cup of tea and a good book, these small acts of self-care can help you stay grounded.

Setting **boundaries** is an act of self-care and your loved ones will understand if you need to pace yourself.

- ▶ **Don't neglect sleep**
Sleep is vital for mental and physical health, yet it's often one of the first things to suffer during the holidays. Late-night parties, early mornings and the general busyness of the season can disrupt your routine. Prioritise getting enough rest by creating a calming pre-sleep routine, avoiding electronic gadgets like your phone prior to sleep and instead try reading, meditating or listening to a nod cast.
- ▶ **Acknowledge your feelings**
For some, the holidays can bring up feelings of loneliness, grief or sadness, especially if you've lost a loved one or are unable to be with family. It's important to recognise and accept these emotions rather than suppressing them. Talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling, whether it's a friend, family member or therapist.
- ▶ **Limit technology and social media**
Scrolling through social media during the holidays can sometimes lead to feelings of comparison and inadequacy. Seeing carefully curated images of other people's celebrations can create unrealistic expectations for your own. Try to limit your time online and focus instead on real-life connections and experiences. Unplugging, even for a few hours, can do wonders for your mental clarity and peace of mind.
- ▶ **Ask for help**
If you're feeling overwhelmed, don't hesitate to ask for help. Whether it's delegating tasks like cooking or shopping, or reaching out to someone for emotional support, remember that you don't have to do everything on your own. Sharing the workload and leaning on your support network can lighten the burden and make the holidays more enjoyable for everyone involved.

By focusing on what really matters such as experiences and wellbeing – you can create a holiday season that feels lighter, more meaningful and far less stressful. That, in itself, is a gift worth cherishing.



Staying Active and Energised During the Colder Months

As the days grow shorter and the temperatures drop, it's tempting to swap your workout routine for a cosy spot on the sofa. However, staying active during winter is essential, not just for your physical health but for your mental wellbeing too. Regular exercise can help combat the winter blues, boost your energy levels and keep your immune system strong.

The good news is you don't need an expensive gym membership or fancy equipment to stay fit this season. Whether you prefer exercising indoors, braving the elements or finding affordable ways to stay active, we've got you covered.

JOIN A WINTER RUNNING CLUB

Running in the colder months might sound daunting, but it can be invigorating once you get started. The crisp air, quieter streets and the satisfaction of completing a run despite the weather can make it a rewarding experience. For added motivation, consider joining a local running club. Many communities have groups that meet regularly, offering support and the encouragement to keep you going. Plus, running with others can make the experience safer and more enjoyable.

If you're new to running, most clubs cater to all abilities and often offer beginner-friendly sessions. Remember to dress appropriately, layering with moisture-wicking clothing and wear reflective gear if you're running in the early mornings or evenings. And don't forget to warm up properly to get your muscles ready for the colder temperatures.

TAKE YOUR WORKOUT INDOORS

When venturing outside feels less than appealing, there are plenty of ways to stay active indoors. You don't need a gym, just a bit of space and some creativity. Here are some ideas:

- ▶ **Online fitness classes**
From yoga and Pilates to HIIT (High-Intensity Interval Training) and dance workouts, there's an abundance of free or low-cost classes available online. Platforms like YouTube and apps like Nike Training Club and FitOn provide a wide range of options for all fitness levels.
- ▶ **Bodyweight exercises**
Squats, lunges, push-ups, planks and burpees are excellent ways to build strength and get your heart rate up, all without needing any equipment. If you want to add an extra push, resistance bands can help accommodate both upper and lower body strength workouts.
- ▶ **Skipping rope**
Skipping is a fantastic cardio workout that's affordable and effective. It improves coordination, burns calories and can be done in a small space. Plus, it's a great way to revisit a fun childhood activity!
- ▶ **Stair workouts**
If you have stairs at home, use them for a quick workout. Walking or running up and down stairs is a great way to get your heart pumping and you can add variations like step-ups or calf raises for an extra challenge.

MAKE FITNESS FUN

Winter workouts don't have to feel like a chore. Incorporate activities you genuinely enjoy to keep your motivation high. Here are some ideas:

- ▶ **Dance**
Whether it's a Zumba class, a dance workout video or simply putting on your favourite playlist and dancing around your living room, dancing is a fantastic way to burn calories and lift your mood.

▶ Winter sports

If you have access to facilities, try ice skating, skiing or snowboarding. These activities are not only excellent for fitness but also make for a fun day out with family or friends.

▶ Family fitness

Turn exercise into a family affair by involving your loved ones. Go for a long winter walk together or if the weather allows, build a snowman! It's a great way to stay active and create cherished memories.

STAY MOTIVATED WITH GOALS AND REWARDS

It's easy to lose motivation during the winter months, so setting clear fitness goals can help keep you on track. Whether it's running a certain distance, mastering a new yoga pose or committing to three workouts a week, having a target to work towards can provide a sense of purpose.

Reward yourself for reaching milestones – perhaps with a new piece of workout gear, a relaxing bath or a cosy evening with your favourite film. Celebrating your progress, no matter how small, can help maintain your enthusiasm.

Celebrating your progress, no matter how small, can help maintain your enthusiasm.

CONSISTENCY, NOT PERFECTION

At the end of the day, winter fitness isn't about being perfect, it's about staying consistent and finding what works for you. Whether it's a brisk walk on a frosty morning, a yoga session in your living room or a fun afternoon of ice skating, every bit of movement counts. By staying active, you'll not only feel stronger and healthier but also more energised and positive during the colder months.



Balancing Comfort Food with Fitness

Winter often brings with it the irresistible allure of comfort food. Think hearty stews, creamy hot chocolates, mince pies and all the festive treats the season has to offer. While these indulgences are one of the joys of winter, it's important to strike a balance to maintain your fitness goals and overall wellbeing. However, you don't need to deny yourself the pleasure of comforting meals; it's all about moderation, mindful choices and pairing indulgence with movement.

► Embrace the 80/20 rule

The 80/20 rule is a simple but effective way to maintain balance. Aim to eat nutrient-dense, wholesome foods 80% of the time, leaving 20% for indulgent treats. This approach allows you to enjoy your favourite comfort foods guilt-free, while still providing your body with the nourishment it needs to fuel your workouts and maintain energy levels.

► Choose smarter comfort foods

Comfort food doesn't have to be unhealthy. With a few tweaks, you can enjoy the same cosy satisfaction while keeping things nutritious:

- Opt for homemade soups packed with vegetables, lean proteins and whole grains. These are both nourishing and warming, without being overly calorie-dense.
- Experiment with healthier baking swaps, like using wholemeal flour, natural sweeteners like honey or maple syrup and adding nuts or seeds for a nutrient boost. Banana bread, oat cookies or spiced muffins can be satisfying alternatives to more sugary options.
- While a creamy hot chocolate is a winter classic, you can try lighter versions made with unsweetened cocoa, low-fat milk or plant-based alternatives. Add a sprinkle of cinnamon for a festive flair without the extra sugar.



Remember to consult your doctor before embarking on any new exercise regime or eating habits if you have an underlying health condition that can be destabilised by lifestyle changes.

► Practice portion control

Sometimes it's not about saying no to your favourite foods, it's about enjoying them mindfully. Serve smaller portions of rich dishes and savour every bite. Eating slowly can help you recognise when you're full, preventing overeating. If you're at a festive gathering, try sampling a little of everything rather than loading up your plate.

► Pair treats with activity

If you know you'll be indulging in a big meal or a favourite treat, balance it out with some extra movement. For example, plan a workout earlier in the day or go for a brisk walk after a hearty dinner. This isn't about 'earning' your food, but rather about creating a healthy balance between what you consume and how you move.

► Listen to your body

Winter can sometimes lead to emotional eating, as shorter days and colder weather make us crave warmth and comfort. Before reaching for a snack, pause and ask yourself if you're truly hungry or if you're eating out of boredom, stress or habit. If it's the latter, consider other ways to comfort yourself, like a warm bath, a good book or a chat with a friend.

► Stay hydrated

It's easy to mistake thirst for hunger, especially during winter when we're less likely to feel thirsty. Staying hydrated can help curb unnecessary cravings and keep your body functioning at its best. Drink plenty of water throughout the day and enjoy herbal teas or infusions for a warming alternative.

Keep in mind, fitness and nutrition during the winter aren't about being perfect, they're about finding balance. If you have an indulgent day, don't beat yourself up. Instead, focus on getting back to your routine the next day. Consistency over time is far more important than occasional treats or skipped workouts.

RESOURCES

- ▶ [MindWell's top 10 tips for winter wellbeing](#)
- ▶ [Winter wellness: how to keep healthy and warm](#)
- ▶ [Self-Care Forum: Winter Wellness](#)
- ▶ [47 Christmas MoneySaving tips](#)
- ▶ [3 tips to help you keep fit in winter](#)
- ▶ [In for the chill: five useful tips to help you stay fit in the winter](#)
- ▶ [Fighting the Fitness Freeze Across the UK: Staying Active in the Winter](#)

NEXT ISSUE:

- ▶ Habit Formation
- ▶ Self Compassion

At Health Partners we offer a full range of tailored health and wellbeing services.

Our thinking is innovative. We constantly develop new responses and tools designed to address the health and wellbeing challenges that face your business and people.

Our commitment is total. We invest in our services, creating new ones and keeping in step with every client. We constantly explore new ways of working and make no compromises in the quality of our services.

Simply put, we are here to help people be their best.

