

4 Ways To Beat the Winter Blues Before They Begin



It seems like winter just left and now it's back again. Every year, it shows up faster and faster.

Even though I've lived in the northern half of Wisconsin my entire life, the older I get, the more annoyed I am getting with the short, cold days of winter.

But I am much better than I used to be. Once I figured out there are small changes to help get through the ice and snow, I actually am able to enjoy life in the frozen tundra.

1. One change I made was incorporating breathwork. If you aren't familiar, that's OK. I had no idea it was a thing either until I started being intentional about it. It's been around for centuries but in our world of hurry, hurry, hurry, and busy, busy, busy, it's been forgotten. In addition to being helpful with reducing stress, creating a habit of mindfulness can possibly help with depression by elevating our mood. The best part is there is no right or wrong way to do breathwork. I started off small. Just a few minutes a day, being still. Start by taking a few deep breaths and let it out with a big sigh. Visualize a box, and take in breath, hold for 3 counts, exhale for 3 counts and pause for 3 counts before inhaling again to start over. And increase as you are able. There is also one nostril breathing, where you hold one nostril closed while deep breathing through the other one. Once you start looking around online you will find more choices to suit your needs.
2. The second change I made was adding guided meditation to my week as needed. This

was also something new, and there are so many options. You can choose the length of time you have, where you would like to “go”, and if you want to listen to an audio with earbuds or watch a video. There are a lot of choices online and many apps for your phone and tablet. My two favorites apps are The Calm app and also Insight Timer. Each one has many options for meditations to choose from, based on how you are feeling at the moment, and what you would like your result to be. Whether it’s calming down before you go to sleep, getting energized in the morning or taking a break in the afternoon to name a few. You can take yourself to the beach and listen to the ocean waves or visit a forest and listen to the wind blowing through the trees through meditation.

3. Along with adding the meditation aspect, I also added in essential oil blends to my day. I have found certain ones to be very helpful with emotional support. And since they are pre-blended when they arrive, it doesn’t take any extra thinking or feelings of overwhelm of what to do with the bottles. I don’t have a degree in aromatherapy, but I have learned it’s very important to be a good label reader, know and trust your source. My favorite blends are for calming, grounding and bringing peace. A forgiveness blend is important, so we can forgive ourselves since our body doesn’t function the way it used to before MS hit. Our nervous system loves it when we are calm and at peace.
4. Finally, my fourth way to beat the winter blues is to change up my music list. You can create a free Spotify account and add songs that inspire, motivate or just make you smile. You can change your list whenever you wish and adding in suggested songs might put a new spin on everything. I love having upbeat dance music in the morning, even though my dancing days have changed dramatically.

These tips are not treatments for multiple sclerosis. But if we can take some small steps to feeling better and liking ourselves more, then it’s a win for us and our health!

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