



## Beat the Autumn Blues

Over the last few weeks, autumn has started to set in: the temperature is dropping, the leaves in the trees are changing colour, and the darkness is growing. Autumn is a natural time for things to draw to a close as nature starts to put everything into dormant mode. This makes it natural for you to feel a drop in energy and mood too, possibly finding it harder to focus and feeling the need for more sleep. Try some of the following to help beat the blues...

**1. Make time for more sleep.** It's natural to need more sleep at this time of the year; there is less sunlight to feed your vitamin D levels in your body, and to activate the serotonin and cortisol levels in your brain, so your body's energy levels can drop. Your body may need more time to recharge and to recuperate from a hard day's work so give it the time it needs. Try to keep your sleep routine consistent by going to bed at the same time every day and waking up at the same time every morning to help regulate your circadian sleep rhythms and improve the quality of sleep you get.

**2. Get up at dawn.** Now that the sun is rising later and setting earlier, there is less sunlight for you to take advantage of, meaning the earlier you get up the better, as you'll be allowing your body to wake up naturally with the sunrise. This will help the production of cortisol and serotonin in your brain, which will help keep your mind alert and your mood positive.

**3. Nourish your body with nutrients.** Your body gets fewer nutrients in the autumn and winter months because there is less sunlight feeding your vitamin D levels. The vegetables and fruits you're eating are less nutritious because they've received less sunlight too, or they're not as fresh as they've travelled from the other side of the world to make it to your plate. This makes it really important for you to vary your diet so you're getting as many nutrients into your body as possible. This is also the perfect time to pick up juicing which is sure to give your body an extra energy boost.

**4. Keep your body moving.** When you're feeling lethargic at this time of the year, it's easy to convince yourself that you're too tired to exercise – but you have to fight this lethargy with action as the more you move, the better you'll feel. This doesn't have to mean a hectic new fitness routine; even taking a brisk walk in fresh air or practising yoga can have a positive impact.

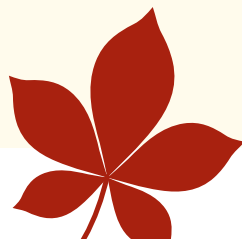
**5. Minimise your screen time.** In autumn it's easy for you to get stuck indoors glued to your work screen, smartphone or TV because it's dark and cold outside. You have to combat this feeling by doing exactly the opposite: force yourself to finish work on time and cap the amount of TV you allow yourself in a day. Give yourself a deadline every night to shut off your smartphone. These small changes will help eliminate the light pollution you get from screens and will make it less likely for you to suffer from sleep disturbances which are more common in autumn and winter when there is less sunlight to regulate your natural bodily rhythm.

**6. Get outside as much you can.** There's no such thing as bad weather, only unsuitable clothing! There really is no excuse not to get outside in the fresh autumn air which is beautifully crisp and will help fill your lungs with oxygen, as well as help regulate your body's natural energy levels. Take the time to enjoy the beautiful shades of colour you see in the trees only this time of the year.

**7. Create cosy spaces.** This is the perfect time of the year to turn your living space into your own little happy place. Light candles, have some autumnal flowers, bake yourself some healthy treats and cosy up with a hot cup of your favourite herbal tea. This will help your mind unwind and your body to recharge.

**8. Cuddle more – within your social bubble!** Cuddles and hugs are a fantastic way to get energy levels up. Physical contact is a natural desire for any human being and there is an expansive amount of research supporting its positive effects on your mood and your energy. Have a movie night in and cuddle up with your partner on the sofa, hold your kids closer, glue your dog to your lap, or put your arms around your horse's neck and breath his/her scent in.

**9. Be kind to yourself.** Last but not least, be kind to yourself. Don't beat yourself up for feeling more tired and being less productive. It's ok for you to not be in top form 24/7 and it's even more ok in these autumn months when your body is adjusting to a whole new environment. Cut yourself some slack and show kindness toward your body by giving it the rest it needs, moving it in a rehabilitating way and nourishing it with all the nutrients you can.





## HEALTHY AUTUMN SNACKS With Elaine

As we say farewell to summer for another year and the nights draw in a bit earlier, our energy levels can drop and we can feel a bit low and start to comfort eat with snacks high in fat and sugar. Try substituting these naughty snacks with some healthy alternatives which can increase your energy, boost mood and are good on the waistline too.

**Sweet potatoes** are a healthier option than potatoes; they are good for regulating blood sugar, includes lots of B vitamins and is also a great hormone balancer! Try sweet potato fries/wedges or mashed sweet potatoes with some butter and lots of black pepper. They are also great for adding to soups and stews.

**Almonds** are great mood boosters – I have a couple of recipes below to combat sugary cravings.

**Frozen almond and coconut bites** – easy recipe if you want something sweet and are trying to cut down on sugar.

3 tbsp of ground almonds, 3 tbsp of coconut oil melted, 1 tbsp of Stevia, 1 tsp of cocoa

Mix together all the ingredients, scoop into an ice cube tray and pop in the freezer for an hour before serving. You could add this to a healthy fruit salad or eat on its own.

### **Almond Butter Protein Balls**

30g chocolate whey protein, 30g ground almonds, 140g almond butter, 1 tbsp honey, desiccated coconut

Mix together the protein powder and ground almonds before stirring in the honey and butter. Use your hands to work the mixture into a big ball. Divide mixture by rolling into 14 balls, dip in coconut before popping on a plate lined with greaseproof paper. Chill for 30 mins before serving.

### **Nice cream**

To hold onto summer, try using frozen bananas instead of buying full fat ice cream which is calorific and full of sugar!

### **Pink Punch Nice Cream**

3 frozen bananas, 2 cups of frozen strawberries or raspberries – you can use any fruit, 3 tablespoons of milk

Use a blender or food processor, combine all the ingredients and blend until smooth.



## Mindfulness and Wellbeing

By Andy Holter

On Tuesday, Boris Johnson announced some additional restrictions to our daily lives, including some of our work and family activities. Many of us may be experiencing some amount of anxiety or even mild levels of stress as we face an estimated six months of additional restrictions to our daily routines. Now more than ever it is important to try to remain mindful of the need to stay positive and confident in our thinking. Positive influences can be infectious and whilst times may be hard and indeed challenging, the opportunity to embrace change with a positive step forward can be a new adventure for many, giving us a chance to embark upon a journey that perhaps we might otherwise never of thought about or even tried. As I have mentioned in previous wellbeing newsletters, physical activities such as walking, swimming, running or cycling can really help our endorphins and stimulate our mood. Gardening, also mentioned, can increase our creative abilities and bring out our nurturing side, whilst being outside in our natural environment can increase our sense of mindfulness.

Within the workplace, looking after ourselves and our colleagues is equally as important, not only for our working relationships, but also for our energy levels and sustainability. We should be very aware of our limitations, and ultimately the potential for burn out. The challenges we face with the current pandemic not only challenges the way we work but also impacts on our emotional and physical demands that we experience.

Small ways to manage these challenges and developing coping strategies could include taking a moment for mindfulness during the working day such as stepping out of the office and inhaling a breath of fresh air; walking round the block; or sitting on a park bench and eating lunch as opposed to at your desk. Even just simply sharing your worries and concerns with others in the workplace can make a difference. These small steps can all help reduce pressures, and in some cases help share the work load too. As the old saying goes... many hands make light work.

As a final food for thought: a problem shared is a problem halved. Why not just take time to talk to one another and share your thoughts, share your concerns, and most of all, the positive things in your day. We all need a bit of that from time to time. So, let's smile, let's be happy and let's embrace whatever is to come in the days and weeks ahead.

“Let's all stand together, but not like before. Please follow the arrows and don't touch the doors. If we try to be patient, thoughtful and kind, we can all do our bit to help save humankind.”

