



## Spring is Here (almost)

By Wendy Marks  
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We finally have winter weather. It's cold and snowy, but Punxsutawney Phil did the right thing and says we won't have six more weeks of winter. Phew. We are all a bit shell-shocked after last winter, so I thought I would bring up thoughts of spring and ways to get ready as a way of cheering everybody up a bit.

Now is the time to prepare for all the joys to come. Preparation on the physical level is probably the first item. Time to get yourself back to the gym or take out that exercise tape, and get your body ready for the wonderful things you will be doing once it's warm enough to be outside.

Readiness is key. Do that stretching so that gardening will be easier. Start building that cardio endurance so that that lovely bike ride will be even more enjoyable. Build up your stamina for a fast walk or run through the soon to be blooming trees. You get the picture - go out and do things. I just returned from the gym. I hate going to the gym. My favorite part of going to the gym is leaving the gym. But I do notice that when I leave the gym I feel looser limbed, and in better spirits due to all those endorphins. They can really help chase away the winter blues. Getting active also helps improve your circulation. The cold floors and chilly bathrooms are unfortunate facts of winter but if you get your circulation moving you not only will feel warmer but your heart will be beating more happily and your spirits will soar. Get yourself outside, and not just for shoveling. This year try a little snowshoeing or cross-country skiing. The woods have beautiful things to show us in the winter. I just saw a beautiful woodpecker in my backyard. This bird is of one that I would've never seen without the snow to highlight it.

Bring some green into your house. Get a plant catalog and order colorful wonderful flowers to put it in the spring. But don't wait for spring to bring in some green friends. Not only do they cheer you up, but they take carbon dioxide out and convert it to nice beautiful oxygen to make your air purer. There is also a lovely psychological effect of having greenery. Remember some plants, like orchids, often bloom inside in our winter. What can be bad about something that is flowering with the snow piled up outside?

Winter is good sleeping time. It is easier to get to bed early when it becomes dark by 5 o'clock. Take this time of year to get a good rest. Pile up the blankets and stock up the sleep. During the summer we want to be out and moving at night. Let the winter be a time to cuddle up and rejuvenate. Curl up with a good book at night. This is a great time to catch up on your reading, or the classic movies you never got around to. Get cozy.

Reduce clutter by getting rid of those clothes that you haven't worn for three years. Even if you do get back into them they won't be in style anymore. Donate them to somebody who needs them. Clean up those piles of magazines. Get your taxes done early. This is the time when you are indoors anyway. You'd be amazed at how great you will feel if you clean out a closet. Recycle, recycle, recycle.

Take your supplements, especially vitamin D. We are cold and indoors a lot and need to really stay on top of things like Omegas and C. The summer is a great time to get everything you need from your food but that really won't happen easily in the winter. Speaking of food, this is a great time to make that root vegetable stew that you'd like to try. Get creative in the kitchen - dig out the crock pot. I particularly like to make chili and curry. Hot foods can really warm you up and spicing things up is one way to heat up your digestion. While we're on the subject get your fluids. People don't realize that it's very easy to get dehydrated in the winter. With the dry air in the house it is easy to forget that you get dry as well. Drink a lot of water, perhaps with a little lemon in it, or make a batch of ginger tea and sip it all day. You will increase your intestinal fire and help you to digest the food of winter.

Get some sun, even if it means going for a drive with your sunroof open and the heat on. We need a little sun on our face especially in this climate of the Northeast. Pile blankets on yourself and lay out on the Chaise lounge with a book or magazine. I promise you will feel better.

And finally get some community. Take a dance class, or learn how to upholster a chair. Go to community education - it's cheap and fun and lots of people are there who, just like you, are dying to get out for an evening in the cold and just chat with others. Community is very important, and we tend to isolate in the winter. So have fun, and enjoy all the blessings of the season of rest and rejuvenation.

Wendy

(Take a look at my new web design. It's a lot fresher look and I'd love to hear what you think)