

## 30 Ways to Cope with Winter Caregiving

Cold temperatures, snow, ice and longer dark hours present different challenges for caregivers and their loved ones. Add flu season and Covid to the mix, and winter has the potential to become even more of a threat. It's essential to be prepared to tackle the season head-on. Here are some vital steps you can take to cope with caregiving in winter.



### GENERAL

- Think back to last winter. Were there some problems you weren't prepared for? Prioritize solutions for them this year.
- Speak to your loved one about staying indoors as much as possible. Everyday activities such as going to the mailbox and clearing snow can be dangerous.
- Seniors are very susceptible to slips and falls on snowy, icy ground. Falls also lead to an increase in hospitalization, chronic pain, and physical disability.
- Seniors can still maintain an active schedule with indoor activities such as walking in community centers or malls, swimming, Tai Chi or yoga, or chair exercises.
- Designate someone — a family member, friend, loved one, or community organization — ahead of time to pinch hit for you to do wellness visits or run errands if you are not available.
- Make sure your loved one has masks and hand sanitizers to help keep them protected from colds, flu and Covid.
- Either visit or call your loved one if a snowstorm or blizzard warning is in effect to ensure they have all they need to stay safe and healthy.

### HOME

- Schedule a furnace checkup. Ideally, one should be done every one to two years. It's also a good idea to have a backup heat source, such as a heat fan with built-in safety features such as overheating protection, cool-touch housing and automatic shut-off in case it tips over.
- Have extra blankets and a hot water bottle at the ready. These are energy-free and less risky ways of keeping warm.
- Stock up on groceries, toiletries, and medical and emergency supplies. It will keep you or your loved one from having to dash out in bad weather to do shopping.
- Use grocery and pharmacy delivery services as well, but don't depend on them solely. Even they can be impeded by severe winter weather and bad driving conditions.
- Consider installing a generator, especially if your loved one uses an oxygen machine. Some small, indoor solar generators can power several appliances and electronics in the event of a power outage.
- Provide your loved one with rechargeable LED camp lights that can be used indoors.
- Make sure your loved one has a fire extinguisher and knows how to use it.
- If you cannot remove snow from your care recipient's driveway, book a snow removal service to take care of it. If you cannot afford it, ask around the neighborhood to find a teen or college student who is providing the service, usually at a more affordable price.
- Remove fallen branches, debris and wet leaves that can increase the risk of falls and injury.
- Spray door keyholes with a product like WD-40 to prevent keys sticking. This could lead to your loved one being locked out in cold weather for an extended period.

*(Continued on next page)*

## 30 Ways to Cope with Winter Caregiving (continued from page 1)

### DRIVING

- If you are your loved one's primary driver, schedule a winter checkup for your car as soon as possible. Throughout winter, do frequent maintenance. If your loved one still drives, ensure that they have already done their winter checkup.



- Do your own winter checkup as well. Ensure that the car heats properly, check the windshield wipers (and keep an extra pack in the trunk). If your car is a rear-wheel-drive vehicle, add a few bags of salt in the boot for some extra weight.
  - Switch to winter tires or at the very least an all-season tire with excellent tread.
  - Spray car door seals or linings with cooking oil to prevent sticking. Replace any damaged seals.
- Ensure that your loved one travels with keyhole deicers in their car to thaw frozen door locks. To create a simple DIY deicer, add one part alcohol to two parts water in a spray bottle.

### SELF CARE

Don't forget to prioritize self-care during winter. Besides the colder weather and shorter hours of sunlight, winter is also stressful because of the holiday season. Here are a few tips to get you over the hump:

- Get as much rest as you can. Naps count too.
- Delegate, delegate, delegate. No task is too small for you to farm out to someone else. It's about the number of tasks or duties you are undertaking rather than how complex or simple any one of them might be.
- If you are prone to seasonal affective disorder, install a UV or blue light lamp in your workspace or home.
- Try to maintain an exercise routine, even if you must switch from your usual outdoor activities to indoor ones.
- Create a sleep routine to help you battle sleeplessness, which can be worse in winter due to disrupted melatonin levels because of shorter daylight hours.

Despite the challenges that winter creates for caregiving, the upside is that the season comes every year. You are expecting it. So, you can prepare for it in a timely and efficient way to make things much smoother for you and your loved one who depends on you.



*Valentine's Day*  
**WORD SCRAMBLE**

VEOL \_\_\_\_\_  
 ORMECNA \_\_\_\_\_  
 ESRHAT \_\_\_\_\_  
 ENVTAIELN \_\_\_\_\_  
 IUCDP \_\_\_\_\_  
 UHG \_\_\_\_\_  
 SKSI \_\_\_\_\_  
 DFSNRIE \_\_\_\_\_  
 HSEATREWET \_\_\_\_\_  
 CYAND \_\_\_\_\_  
 LOWESFR \_\_\_\_\_  
 AHTRE \_\_\_\_\_  
 DIOYALH \_\_\_\_\_  
 ACTOEOLCH \_\_\_\_\_  
 SFIGT \_\_\_\_\_  
 ARCD \_\_\_\_\_

[WWW.TWOKIDSANDACOUPON.COM](http://WWW.TWOKIDSANDACOUPON.COM)

*Happy Valentine's Day*

**THE BEST AND MOST BEAUTIFUL THINGS IN THE WORLD CANNOT BE SEEN OR EVEN TOUCHED. THEY MUST BE FELT WITH THE HEART.**

**Save The Date**  
**Saturday, May 3, 2025**



**BILL MARTIN**  
**MEMORIAL**  
PICKLEBALL SCRAMBLE  
FOR THRIVE ALLIANCE

**CERA Sports & Recreation Park**  
Beginner (2.0-2.4); Recreational (2.5-2.9); Intermediate (3.0-3.4);  
Competitive (3.5-3.9); and, Advanced (4.0+) Levels

**DETAILS TO COME!!**

## Dementia Caregiver Support Group

Presented by: Alzheimer's Association of Greater Indiana

2nd and 4th Monday of the month 2:00 p.m. - 3:30 p.m.

Seymour Community Center, 107 South Chestnut St., Seymour, IN 47274

Do you have an email address? Want to receive your newsletters electronically? Please submit your email address to [jferril@thrive-alliance.org](mailto:jferril@thrive-alliance.org) for future correspondence! If you desire a listing of caregiver support groups whether live or virtual please e-mail or call me at 812-399-5854. We also have a Thrive Alliance Caregiver Resources Facebook group. Please e-mail or call if you would like to be a part of the group. If you want removed from the mailings, please let me know as well.