



# BENDING WITH THE BREEZE

*Integrative Strategies for Wellness Across the Seasons*

## INTEGRATIVE MEDICINE AT HENNEPIN HEALTHCARE

*The Person-Centered and Culturally-Inspired Division of Integrative Health at Hennepin Healthcare is grounded in a multi-disciplinary team dedicated to partnering with patients, community, and each other to nurture healing, uncover root causes of illness, and offer whole-person, customized care to cultivate well-being for everyone.*



## WINTER WELLNESS

*Dr. Brooke Curb and Chaplain Maia Twedt muse on body/mind/spirit winter wellness...*

**Chaplain Maia Twedt** reflects that winter provides a gentle reminder to **rest, renew, and recalibrate**. By its very darkness it signals to us to slow our pace and pause to find spaces that allow our creativity to engage and our wisdom to surface.

The book [Wintering: The Power of Rest and Retreat in Difficult Times](#) by Katherine May has a lot to say about paying attention to the biorhythms of our bodies and allowing care especially as we honor limitations on our health and energy.

If you are feeling the heaviness of winter in your mind or spirit, consider trying a new spiritual practice. One easy thing to start with is the practice of **bathing**. You add some essential oil to the water, or some extra time to allow the warmth to soak into your body.

Another wintertime spiritual practice is the practice of **lighting candles**. Candles can be purchased cheaply at second hand stores. Lighting a candle is a practice of honoring light that is present even amidst darkness.

There is sometimes a big flurry around the holiday seasons of the winter. Maybe a spiritual practice would be to find some way to build in more ease instead of complication for the holidays. Maybe it is time to **simplify a tradition**, or replace it with a new one. An example would be to limit the number of social engagements to just one or two meaningful experiences.

To address how to **balance our nervous system** this winter, **Integrative PT Brook Curb** reminds us that the resiliency of our nervous system allows us to handle stress with increased ease: the small, the big, the daily, and everything in between.

Winter provides an ideal time to focus on slowing down, going within, tuning into our body's needs. This season is an optimal time to practice nervous system regulation through these daily habits:

1. Deep, Conscious **Belly Breathing** - Sit in a comfortable position with your feet touching the floor. With your eyes closed, place one hand on your stomach and one hand on your chest. Take deep, long breaths in and out through your nose, with the breath expanding and relaxing the belly.
2. **Mindful Movement** - Move your body in a way you ENJOY
3. Time in Nature - Bundle up for a **Winter Walk with a Doc on Dec 11th**
4. **Minimize Screen Time**, News, and Social Media
5. Practice **Mindfulness** - Focus on one task at a time. Whether it's during the work day, cooking at home, spending time with family, exercising - focus on the task at hand and minimize multi-tasking.
6. **Prioritize Sleep** - Allow the darker, colder months to aid in a calming bedtime routine, ideally aiming for 8 hours of sleep for overall body and brain health.

## WINTER OFFERINGS

### Group Medical Visits/Classes

- Gentle Yoga for Cancer Care** - Tuesdays 3:30-4:30pm (in-person or zoom)
- Mind-Body Skills for Health and Wellbeing** - 8 weeks, Tues 1:15-3:15, begins 1/11 (zoom)
- Recovering and Regaining Health from COVID-19** - 7 weeks, Wed 10am-12pm, begins 1/12 (zoom)
- Growing Resilience in Chronic Pain** - 8 weeks, Thurs 2-4pm, begins 1/20 (in person, CSC Downtown)
- Gain Blood Sugar Balance** - 8 weeks, Thurs 9:45am-11:45am, begins 1/20 (zoom)
- Continuing with Restoring Health** - monthly drop ins 1st Mon of the month beginning 2/7 (zoom)
- Mindfulness-Oriented Recovery Enhancement** - 8 weeks, Tues 1:15-3:15pm, begins 3/22 (zoom)
- Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction** - Dates TBD

### Community Events

- Walk with a Doc** -Community walks for everyone on the **2nd Sat of the Month (12/11, 1/8, 2/12)**, from **10-11am** at the **Mpls Sculpture Garden Park** (meet at the Cowles Pavilion) OR if the weather is bad, at the **Mpls Institute of Art** (main lobby)
- Healing Touch** - Level 1 Training, Dec 10-11
- Mid-day Mindfulness Practice Breaks** - Thursdays 12-12:30 (zoom)
- For More Info on all Winter Offerings, Go To:**  
[www.hennepinhealthcare.org/specialty/integrative-health/](http://www.hennepinhealthcare.org/specialty/integrative-health/)



### Healing Hot Toddy

Place 3 tsp of grated ginger, 4 crushed dry juniper berries (if available), 1/8 tsp of chili flakes (optional), and 2 star anise into a tea infuser in a tea pot. Pour 4 cups of almost boiling water over the infuser and let it rest for 7 min. Take out two mugs and pour the juice of 1 lemon into each (2 lemons total). Add 1 Tbsp of honey to each glass. Divide the Hot Toddy infusion from the tea pot into each mug and stir. Place a slice of lemon and a cinnamon stick to each mug.  
 Share with a friend and drink up!

## LEGS UP THE CHAIR

*Here's a calming restorative yoga practice to help with sleep and stress this winter season*

**Get Started** - Lay on the floor with your legs resting on the seat of a chair or couch. Let your arms relax out at your sides with the palms facing upwards,.

**Being There** - Close your eyes and feel the full weight of your body drop into the support of the floor and the chair, allowing all unnecessary muscle tension to wash out of your body with every exhale. Feel the same sense of calm and relaxation that you feel in your body creep into your mental state – letting go of your worries or stresses. This posture slows our heart rate and triggers a deep relaxation reflex in the body. Stay for 10-20 breaths (or more!) – But if your feet start to go cold or numb, it's time to come out.

**Coming Out** - To exit the pose, gently draw your knees to your chest and roll to one side

**Stay on your side for AT LEAST 5 slow breaths** before returning to upright (if you have abnormally low or high blood pressure you may need to rest on your side even longer)



## Winter Herbal and Nutritional Support

Acupuncturist **Angela Clifford** has lots of strategies to help us stay warm this winter. In Traditional Chinese Medicine, **water** is the element of winter and so she recommends teas and tonics to help stay in balance this season. Simple herbs like **cinnamon** or **ginger** can be added to coffee, tea, or a hot toddy with lemon and honey. **Scallions** (green onions) added to miso or bone broth will push any lingering cold to the surface to be released; adding **cajenn** or **black pepper** will add some turbo power. Sore throats can be soothed with **licorice root** tea and **elderberry** tea or syrup is great for coughs. See the recipe above for an alcohol-free winter **Healing Hot Toddy!**



## PROVIDER SPOTLIGHT

*Get to know Jess Siers, LAc, DiplAc*

**What is your specialty?** Acupuncture

**What do you love most about your job?** I love how well our acupuncture, chiropractic, PT, and medical services blend to serve our patients who live with pain conditions.

**What brings you comfort in winter time?** Hot tea, savory soups, and fuzzy blankets!

**What is a healthy pleasure of yours?** Yoga Nidra, also called "Yogic Sleep", a guided meditation practice.

### North Winter by Loren Cruden

*North, great white giant, please hear this prayer. I greet the coming of Winter, the coming of night. I give thanks for rest and peace and renewal.*

*Spirits of stone, of crystal, of bone, spirits of mountain, I pray for alignment with your ancient wisdom and endurance.*

*Please share your teachings with me - tell me your memories.*

Chosen by Jenn Wroblewski, Integrative PT