Putting Together a Winter Self-Care Kit

Winter can be a difficult few months to get through. The cold weather keeps us indoors and takes a toll on our bodies. Mood has been shown to be drastically worsened in the winter than during any other season. So, before the first blizzard of the year, make sure you get are prepared with some simple items that might help you make it until spring decides to show up.

**Winter Accessories**

Just like you would get flip flops and sandals in anticipation for summer, winter needs its own accessories. Whether it is a new, comfy hand knit scarf, mittens, or a new beanie make sure you have the accessories to keep you warm and safe this winter. The extremities get cold the fastest because your body naturally keeps your core, where your vital organs are, warm before your hands, toes, and face. Therefore, you will need to prepare clothing that will keep them extra toasty this winter.

**Skincare Products**

The dry, cold winter can have devastating effects on your skin. Make sure you have moisturizers to keep your skin nurtured, soft, and not chapped this winter. One of the most sensitive areas are the lips, where chapping can happen with the barest exposure to a harsh winter. Opt for an "ointment"-type moisturizer that is oil-based rather than water-based to create a protective barrier on your skin that will better retain moisture. This should prevent cracking, chapping, or itching of the skin, especially if you keep them covered up with winter accessories!

**Vitamin D Supplements**

The body produces vitamin D naturally, but only when it is exposed to regular sunshine. Vitamin D is related to bone maintenance, absorption of calcium, balance, and memory. During winter months, when the days are shorter and you're inside more often, you will have to take a vitamin D supplement to make up for the lack of sunshine and natural vitamin D production. Go for clear, football-shaped vitamin D3, which has been shown to have a greater effect than vitamin D2, which is white and opaque.

**Indoor Workout Plans**

Regular exercise is a part of any healthy lifestyle, so it is important to remain active throughout the winter months. For those who work out regularly outside, this may not be possible after a blizzard, so it is necessary to have plans to do alternative exercises at home.

Most yoga programs can be done at home with the aid of a DVD or an online streaming service for both physical, emotional, and mental strengthening. If you have access to a car, you can still attend in-person yoga classes, since most of the time will still be spent indoors.

High-intensity interval training with bodyweight exercises is another often recommended form of indoor exercise, particularly using the 4-minute Tabata method. This is a method where you exercise strenuously for 20 seconds followed by 10 seconds of rest for 8 cycles. This has been demonstrated to be equivalent to a 30-minute workout!

Winter can be scary to anticipate, but people have gone through them for millennia with a bit of preparation. If you put together a winter self-care kit that addresses your needs, you should be able to make it without any problems. Keeping your body healthy and active will make the 3 months go by like nothing!