Your guide to a *safer, warmer winter*

Practical advice for staying comfortable, healthy and independent at home throughout the colder months.

From preparing your home for colder weather to looking after your wellbeing, this guide brings together useful advice to help you feel ready for winter.
A little preparation now can make everyday life easier, whatever the weather brings.



Visiting Angels | Your home. Your care. Your choice.



Keeping your home warm & safe

A comfortable home starts with a little preparation

As temperatures drop and daylight hours become shorter, a few changes around the home can make a real difference to comfort and safety.
Cold indoor temperatures can affect health, particularly for people with existing medical conditions or reduced mobility. Preparing your home before the coldest weather arrives can help prevent avoidable problems.

Keep the warmth in
Aim to keep rooms you regularly use at a comfortable temperature. UK health guidance recommends heating frequently used rooms to at least 18°C, particularly for people aged 65 and over or those with health conditions. Some people may need a higher temperature. Close curtains when it gets dark to help retain warmth, and use draught excluders around doors where needed. Wearing several lighter layers can also help you stay comfortable indoors.

Make everyday spaces safer
Darker mornings and evenings can make obstacles harder to spot. Check that hallways, stairs and entrances are well-lit, and consider night lights for routes between the bedroom and bathroom.Keep walkways clear of loose cables, clutter and trailing rugs. Make sure frequently used items are within easy reach to avoid unnecessary stretching or climbing.



Check your heating before you need it
If you have a boiler, arrange servicing by a qualified professional and check that your heating is working properly before temperatures fall significantly.
Make sure you have a working carbon monoxide alarm where required, and never use a cooker or oven to heat your home.

YOUR WINTER HOME CHECKLIST

- Check that your heating is working properly.
- Keep frequently used rooms comfortably warm.
- Check smoke and carbon monoxide alarms.
- Make sure entrances, hallways and stairs are well-lit.
- Remove trip hazards from frequently used walkways.
- Keep blankets and warm clothing easily accessible.

Useful resource: For advice on keeping warm and well during colder weather, visit **gov.uk**.



Looking after your health through winter

Small daily habits that support your welbeing

Winter can change how much time we spend outdoors, how often we move around and even what we feel like eating. Maintaining a few familiar habits can help support physical and mental wellbeing throughout the season.

Eat regularly and stay hydrated

Warm, balanced meals can help maintain energy levels during colder weather. Soups, stews and other easy-to-prepare dishes are useful options, particularly when getting out to the shops becomes difficult.

Keep a selection of cupboard and freezer essentials available for days when the weather affects your usual shopping routine.

Remember to drink regularly throughout the day. It's easy to overlook hydration when the weather is cold, especially if you don't feel particularly thirsty.

Keep moving in ways that suit you

Spending more time indoors doesn't have to mean becoming less active.

Walking around the home, gentle stretching, standing up regularly or following a suitable seated exercise routine can help maintain mobility and circulation.

Choose activities that are comfortable and appropriate for your health and abilities. Even a few minutes of regular movement can be beneficial.



Stay on top of winter health
Colder months often bring an increase in respiratory illnesses. Check whether you're eligible for seasonal vaccinations, like flu and arrange appointments where appropriate. If you take regular medication, check your supplies before periods of severe weather and allow enough time to request repeat prescriptions.

If you begin feeling unwell, seek advice from your pharmacist, GP or NHS 111 rather than waiting for symptoms to become more difficult to manage.

A SIMPLE DAILY WELLBEING CHECK

Ask yourself:

- Have I eaten regular meals and had enough to drink?
- Have I moved around in a way that feels comfortable?
- Am I warm enough at home?
- Have I taken any prescribed medication as directed?
- Have I had an opportunity to speak to someone or enjoy an activity?



Preparing for bad weather

Make a plan before the weather changes

Snow, ice, heavy rain and strong winds can disrupt everyday routines, sometimes with very little notice.
Having a simple plan in place means you're less likely to be caught without the essentials you need.

Keep a few essentials ready
Before severe weather is forecast, check that you have enough food, household supplies and prescribed medication to manage if you cannot get out for a few days.
Keep a torch, spare batteries, warm clothing and a charged phone or power bank somewhere accessible.
It's also worth keeping important contact numbers written down in case your mobile phone runs out of battery.

Plan journeys carefully
Icy pavements, wet leaves and poor visibility can make travelling more difficult.
Check the weather forecast before leaving home, wear footwear with good grip and allow extra time for journeys. Where possible, choose well-lit, maintained routes.
If conditions are particularly poor, consider rearranging non-essential outings or asking someone to help with shopping and errands.



Know what to do if the power goes out

A power cut can affect heating, lighting and communication.
Keep a torch within easy reach, close internal doors to retain warmth and use extra clothing or blankets if the heating stops working.
In Great Britain, you can call 105 to report a power cut or find out more about a local electricity outage.
If you rely on electrically powered medical equipment, speak to your electricity network operator in advance about the Priority Services Register and make an appropriate backup plan.

KEEP THESE CONTACTS HANDY

Family member or trusted contact: _____
GP surgery: _____
Local pharmacy: _____
Electricity power cut helpline: 105
NHS non-emergency medical advice: 111
Emergency services: 999

Useful resource: Check local weather warnings and forecasts at **metoffice.gov.uk**.



Making the most of winter

Keep enjoying the routines that matter to you.

Shorter days and unpredictable weather can make it tempting to spend more time indoors. But winter can still offer plenty of opportunities to enjoy hobbies, maintain connections and make plans. The key is finding a balance that works for you.

Make plans you can look forward to

Having something in the diary can bring structure and enjoyment to the week.
This might mean meeting a friend for coffee, visiting a local library, attending a community group or continuing a favourite hobby at home. During the festive season, it could be a trip to a Christmas market, sending cards, choosing gifts or decorating the home.
Plans don't have to be ambitious. The important part is continuing to enjoy activities that feel meaningful to you.

Find alternatives when the weather gets in the way

If an outing isn't practical, think about how you could adapt it rather than cancelling your plans altogether. A regular visit to a local club might become a phone call with a friend. A shopping trip could be replaced with a delivery, leaving more time to enjoy a favourite activity at home. Having a few alternatives in mind can help prevent bad weather from disrupting the entire week



Stay connected with the people around you

Regular contact with friends, family and neighbours can make a difference to how connected you feel, particularly during periods when going out is difficult.

Arrange calls or visits in advance, explore local community activities, or ask someone to help you use video calling if you'd like another way to stay in touch.

A LITTLE WINTER INSPIRATION



At home

Enjoy a favourite film, try a new recipe, work on a hobby or spend time reading

Out and about

Visit a café, library, garden centre or local community event when conditions allow.





With family and friends

Arrange a regular catch-up, plan a shared activity or invite someone over for an afternoon.

Winter doesn't have to mean putting your favourite routines on hold. Sometimes, it simply means finding a different way to enjoy them.



When everyday routines need a little extra support

Recognising when additional help could be useful

Winter can make everyday activities more demanding, even for people who are usually very independent.

A weekly shopping trip might become difficult during icy weather. Preparing meals may take more energy than usual, or family members who normally visit may be unavailable over the festive period.

These changes don't necessarily mean someone needs to give up their independence. Sometimes, a little additional support can make familiar routines easier to maintain.

Signs that it might be time to consider support

- Everyday tasks are becoming more tiring

Activities such as shopping, preparing meals, getting dressed or keeping the home tidy may begin to require more effort.

- Getting out is becoming difficult

Poor weather, reduced mobility or concerns about slipping can make appointments, errands and social outings harder to manage.



- Usual routines are changing

Meals may be skipped, household tasks left unfinished or activities that someone previously enjoyed become less frequent.

- Family support isn't always available

Work commitments, travel and seasonal pressures can make it difficult for relatives to provide the same level of practical help.

Start with a conversation

If you've noticed any of these changes in yourself or someone close to you, it may help to talk about which parts of everyday life are becoming more difficult.
Consider what support would be useful, which routines are important to maintain and what the person would prefer to continue doing independently.
Support doesn't have to mean making major changes. It can begin with one activity, one regular visit or a little extra assistance during the colder months.

A useful question to ask

Which part of your usual week would be easier with a little extra support?



How Visiting Angels can support you.

Care that fits around your life, whatever the season

At Visiting Angels, we believe that care should support the life you want to lead, not change it.
Whether you need practical assistance during the winter months or more regular support at home, our caregivers are there to help you maintain your routines, enjoy your independence and continue doing what matters to you.

Practical help at home
Our caregivers can assist with meal preparation, light household tasks, shopping and everyday routines, helping you keep your home comfortable and organised when the weather makes daily activities more challenging.



Support getting out and about
From attending appointments and collecting shopping to visiting a favourite café or enjoying a seasonal outing, a caregiver can accompany you and help you continue making the most of your local community.



Personal care that respects your preferences
For those who need assistance with washing, dressing or other personal care routines, our caregivers provide respectful, personalised support that takes individual preferences and independence into account.

Companionship and familiar routines
Regular visits can offer conversation, shared activities and opportunities to continue enjoying favourite hobbies, particularly during periods when getting out or seeing family and friends becomes more difficult.

You choose your caregiver
One of the most important parts of the Visiting Angels approach is choice.
We believe you should have a say in who provides your care. That's why we give clients the opportunity to choose their caregiver, helping build familiar, trusted relationships over time.
Your care is planned around your individual needs, preferences and routines, with the flexibility to review arrangements as they change.





What support might look like

Monday

A caregiver accompanies you on your weekly shop, helps carry and put away groceries and makes sure you have the essentials you need for the week ahead.

Wednesday

A caregiver helps prepare a warm meal, assists with light household tasks and supports your usual daily routine.

Friday

Whether it's a visit to a local café, attending an appointment or enjoying an afternoon at home, your caregiver supports you in spending your time the way you choose.

Every care arrangement is different. The support you receive should always reflect what matters most to you.

Need support this winter?

WE'RE HERE TO TALK

Visiting Angels Leeds & Wakefield

Call Leeds
0113 552 9999

Call Wakefield
01924 973337

Email
lw@visiting-angels.co.uk

Visit
www.visiting-angels.co.uk/leeds-wakefield

