



**Independent
Age**

**GREATER
MANCHESTER**
DOING AGEING DIFFERENTLY

Winterwise

**Advice for older people on how to
keep healthy and well this winter**

Keep warm

Pay bills

Get vaccinated

Get medical help

Eat well

Stay safe

Exercise at home

Mental health



Introduction



Independent Age is a charity that helps older people to live well.

We have written this guide to give you tips on how to keep well over winter. It tells you where you can get more information, help and advice.

You can also contact us for more information.

Website: www.independentage.org

Email: advice@independentage.org

Phone Monday to Friday 8:30am to 5:30pm:
0800 319 6789

Independent Age
18 Avonmore Road, London, W14 8RR
020 7605 4200
charity@independentage.org

Independent Age is the operating name of the Royal United Kingdom Beneficent Association. Registered charity number 210729 (England and Wales) SC047184 (Scotland).



We have worked with Greater Manchester Combined Authority, which is the 10 councils in Greater Manchester working together, to make this booklet.

Website: www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk



Staying warm

People are worried about the cost of putting the heating on, but it is important to stay warm. Being cold is uncomfortable and bad for health.



- Keep the temperature when you are home to at least 18° C (64°F) day and night.



- Keep warm in bed at night. Put extra blankets or clothes on top and use a hot water bottle or an electric blanket – but not both at the same time as that is dangerous.

- Make sure you know how to use your electric blanket. Get it checked every 3 years.



- Get your boiler checked every year to make sure it works safely and does not break down when you really need it.

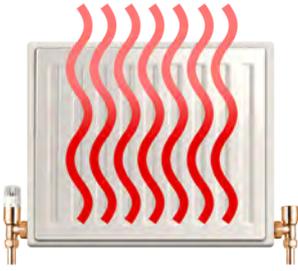
If you rent your home, check your landlord has had your boiler checked and serviced.



Contact the Gas Safe Register to find an engineer:

Website: www.gassaferegister.co.uk

Phone: 0800 408 5500



Community warm spaces

A lot of councils are opening warm banks. These are local places that are heated, where you can go and sit, chat with other people and maybe have a cup of tea.

Ask your local council if there are any near you.

Priority Services Register

Sign up for your energy supplier's Priority Services Register if you are over State Pension age, disabled, have a long-term illness, have sight or hearing loss, or are in a vulnerable situation.

It gets you extra support such as being told about power cuts, other ways of cooking and heating if there is a problem with your power supply and lots of other help to make things easier.

To sign up, contact the company you pay your bills to.



More information at:

Website: www.ofgem.gov.uk/get-help-your-supplier-priority-services-register

Help with bills



There are benefits and extra payments this winter to help people with the big rises in energy bills and the cost of living.

Pension Credit

This is extra money to top up your pension. It is for people over State Pension age who are on a low income.

If you get it, it means you can also get other things such as Cold Weather Payments, Winter Fuel Payments and money off Council Tax and help with health costs.

You can check online if you are able to claim it.

Website: www.gov.uk/pension-credit/how-to-claim

Phone: 0800 99 1234

Winter Fuel Payment

This is for people over State Pension age who get certain benefits. It is between £250 and £600 and is paid in with your State Pension. If you are able to claim it you will get it every year.



There is more information online. If you think you should get it, and have not been paid it by 13 January, you can contact the Winter Fuel Payment Helpline.

Website: www.gov.uk/winter-fuel-payment

Phone: 0800 731 0160



Cold Weather Payments

Between 1 November and 31 March, if it is colder than 0°C for 7 days in a row in your area, you may get a payment of £25 to help with your heating costs.

It will be paid into the same bank or building society as your benefits are. You need to be on a low income and getting a benefit such as Pension Credit. If you think you should get this, contact your pension centre.

Warm Home Discount

You may get this if you get Guarantee Pension Credit or are on a low income. It is £150 and is not paid to you, but is taken off your energy bill. Your energy supplier has to be part of the Warm Home Discount scheme. You can check if they are.

Website: www.gov.uk/the-warm-home-discount-scheme/energy-suppliers

Phone: 0800 731 0214

Energy Bills Support Scheme

A total of £400 will be taken off your energy bills over winter. £66 will be taken off in October and November and £67 in December, January, February and March. You do not have to claim it, it should be done automatically.



If you use a prepayment meter you will be sent vouchers by either SMS text, email or post, or it will be added to your credit when you top up.



Winter Fuel Support Scheme

This is only in Wales. It is a one-off cash payment of £200 from your local council to help with your fuel bills. You can apply to your local council if you get some benefits such as Pension Credit, or Carer's Allowance.

Cost of Living Payment

This is for people on means-tested benefits such as Pension Credit. It is up to £650, paid in 2 parts, one from July, the other in Autumn 2022. You do not have to claim.



Pensioner Cost of Living Payment

If you are over State Pension age and getting the Winter Fuel Payment, you will also get up to £300 Pensioner Cost of Living Payment with your Winter Fuel Payment in November or December 2022.

Disabled people

If you have been getting a disability benefit such as Attendance Allowance from May 2022, you will get a one-off payment of £150 from September 2022.

The help you can get this winter may change.

Independent Age can check you are getting all your benefits and help you claim Pension Credit.

Website: www.independentage.org/get-advice/money/benefits/financial-help-cold-weather

Phone: 0800 319 6789





If you have trouble paying fuel bills

If you are finding it hard to pay your energy bills, or owe money, there are things you can do.

Debt advice services

These can tell you how to get help and what energy companies can and cannot do if you are in debt. With them you can apply for the government's 'Breathing Space Scheme'. This can give you up to 60 days protection from companies you owe money to.

Find debt advice services near you.



Website: www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en/money-troubles/dealing-with-debt/debt-advice-locator

Phone our helpline: 0800 319 6789

Your energy supplier can help

- Talk to your energy supplier.
- They can give you advice on using less energy.
- They must help you to pay them.
- They must give extra help to people who get State Pension, have a disability, or a chronic illness.



Your energy supplier cannot cut you off between 1 October and 31 March if you are State Pension age and live on your own, or live only with people who are State Pension age.



Money to help you pay

Your energy supplier may be able to give you a break from paying, or more time to pay. They may have hardship funds. Ask them if they have a grant or trust. If they do not you can ask the British Gas Energy Trust for a grant. You need proof you have had money advice.



Website: www.britishgasenergytrust.org.uk

Phone: 0121 348 7797

You can also ask Charis who are a charity for a grant.



Website: www.charisgrants.com

Phone: 01733 421075

Getting help

If you cannot agree with your energy supplier, contact Citizens Advice in England or Wales.



Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Phone: 0808 223 1133

Or if you live in Scotland contact Advice Direct Scotland



Website: www.energyadvice.scot

Phone 0808 196 8660

National Debtline



Website: www.nationaldebtline.org

Phone: 0808 808 4000

Step Change



Website: www.stepchange.org

Phone: 0800 138 1111

Staying safe



Fire safety



- Fit at least 1 smoke alarm on every floor of your home.
- Test them by pressing the button until it beeps.
- Do not smoke in the house, never smoke in bed.
- Turn the cooker off before you go out of the kitchen.
- If you use candles, use a candle holder.
Do not leave them lit if you go out of the room.
- Be careful with open fires. Use a fire guard.
- Keep portable heaters away from curtains and furniture. Do not dry clothes on them.
Unplug them when you go out or go to bed.
- Make an escape plan about how you would get out if there was a fire. Think about what way you would go, keep it clear.

If you would need help to get out, talk to your care provider or the fire service about this.

Your local fire service may be able to visit you for a free fire safety check.

Get contact details of your local fire service at
Website: www.nationalfirechiefs.org.uk/ fire-
and-rescue-services

Contact the National Fire Chiefs Council

Phone: 0121 380 7311



If there is a fire in your home, get out, stay out,
get the fire service out.

Phone: 999

Carbon monoxide

This is a gas that can leak from things such as gas
fires, gas cookers, boilers and water heaters.

Carbon monoxide poisoning can give you a headache,
make you feel dizzy, or out of breath. It can make you
faint or even kill you.



- Get anything that uses gas checked every year.
- Get a carbon monoxide alarm.



A carbon monoxide alarm works like a smoke alarm.
You can get them from DIY stores and supermarkets.
Remember to check the batteries.

If you suspect you have a gas leak in your home, phone
the National Gas Emergency Number

Phone: 0800 111 999

How to avoid trips and falls



- Use a non-slip bath mat.



- Mop up spills.



- Have a night light in your bedroom or a torch by your bed in case you get up in the night.

- Keep power leads out of the way.



- Keep stairs well-lit and clear of clutter.

- Carry a phone inside and outside so you can call for help.



If you go outside when it is icy, wear shoes with good grip. Grit and salt your path – buy it from a DIY store, or some councils will give it you.



If you have a fall

Lie still for a minute and check to see if you have hurt yourself. If you cannot move try to get help by calling out, phoning someone, or using your pendant alarm if you have one, or by banging on radiators or walls.

How to get up from a fall



If you are not in pain and think you are OK here is a safer way to get up off the floor



1. Roll onto your side, push up with your elbows.



2. Push with your arms to get onto your hands and knees.



3. Crawl to a chair or bed and hold onto it.



4. Put 1 foot flat on floor, 1 knee on the floor.



5. Push yourself up with your arms and your front leg until you are standing.



6. Turn around and sit down and relax to get your breath back to normal.

Scams

A scam is when someone tries to trick you out of money. It is a crime to scam someone.



- Scammers can call at your door, phone you, send a text message or an email.

- Remember you do not have to let them in, talk to them, or reply to messages.



- Be wary of things that sound too good to be true.
- Do not give out bank details or passwords to people.



- If they say they are from the council or government departments such as the Department of Work and Pensions, check they are who they say they are.



- Have your own phone numbers for these organisations. Do not trust any phone number or identification card you are given.
- If you think you have been scammed tell your bank.

If you live in England or Wales, scams should be reported to Action Fraud



Website: www.actionfraud.police.uk

Phone: 0300 123 2040

If you live in Scotland, report scams to Police Scotland
Phone 101

Health emergencies

If it is an emergency



Phone: **999**

Try to stay calm. Answer the questions the operator asks you. Do not hang up until they say you can.



If it is not an emergency, or you are not sure what to do

Website: www.111.nhs.uk

Phone: **111**

You can ask for a translator if you need one.



Pharmacies may be able to help you.

Some GP surgeries and pharmacies are part of the NHS Minor Ailment Scheme. You can visit them if your health issue is not urgent. If you do not usually pay for prescriptions, you will not have to pay for medicine for minor illnesses. Ask your pharmacy if they are a part of it.



If you are deaf, hearing impaired or have a speech impediment, you can register for the emergency SMS scheme. This lets you contact emergency services by text. www.emergencysms.net

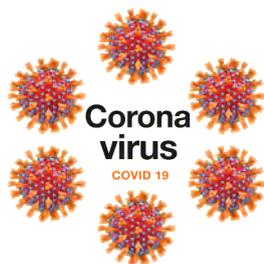
Mental health emergencies

If you need an urgent mental health assessment go to your local Accident and Emergency Department.

SAMARITANS

You can talk to someone about how you are feeling, contact The Samaritans

Phone: **116 123**



COVID-19 and jabs

COVID-19 may get worse in winter

You can do these things to protect yourself:



- Wear a mask
- Keep your distance
- Wash your hands
- Carry a hand sanitiser with you
- Get your booster jab



The COVID-19 Booster Jab is free if you are:

- Over 50 years old
- Living in a care home, or
- Living with a medical condition that makes you more vulnerable to COVID-19.

Your GP will let you know when you can book an appointment with them, or you can book online at:
Website: <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/coronavirus-covid-19/coronavirus-vaccination/book-coronavirus-vaccination/>

Other vaccinations



Flu

Flu is more than a bad cold. It can make you very ill. Flu changes, so you need to have a flu jab every year. It is free if you are:

- Over 50 years old
- A carer of an older person
- Have health conditions such as diabetes, or asthma

Contact your GP to arrange a jab, or some pharmacies can give flu jabs.

Pneumonia

You only have to have the Pneumonia jab once. It also protects you against meningitis and septicaemia. It is free if you are over 65 years old. Contact your GP to get the jab, or check if you have already had it.

Shingles



This vaccination is free if you are 70 to 79 years old. Your GP or practice nurse will offer you this when you go there, or you can contact your GP and arrange it.

Staying well

Mental health and wellbeing

Winter can make people feel low.

There are things you can do to keep well.

- Exercise.
- Eat well.
- Stay in touch with family and friends, meet up or talk on the phone, or online.
- Take part in events, community groups and clubs.
- Be a volunteer.
- Make a list of phone numbers or use a calendar.
- Try not to worry about things you cannot change.
- If things on the news upset you, just watch or listen once a day.
- Keep busy, make a list of things you need to do.
- Take time to do things that make you happy.
- If you feel still feel low, talk to people about it.





Contact your GP, or organisations such as Silver Line

Website: www.thesilverline.org.uk

Phone: 0800 470 8090



Samaritans

Website: www.samaritans.org

Phone: 116 123



Eating well

Eat different sorts of food, so you get all the things your body needs.

- Have at least 1 hot meal a day.
- Drink 6 to 8 drinks a day.



Some should be water, not just tea or coffee.

Do not have too many fizzy drinks.

Do not drink too much alcohol, do not drink it every day.



Getting out to shop

If you find it hard to get out to shop, some charities can help. Age UK have a delivery service. You have to pay for the service.



Website: www.ageuk.org.uk/services/in-your-area/shopping

Phone: 0800 678 1602

Your council may be able to deliver food, or have a 'Meals On Wheels' service.

Website: www.gov.uk/meals-home

Phone: **Your local council**



Foodbanks

If you are finding it hard to pay for food, Foodbanks can give you food and support.



To find out where your nearest Foodbank is, contact The Trussell Trust

Website: www.trusselltrust.org

Phone: **01722 580 178**



The Independent Food Aid Network have an online map of foodbanks.

Website: www.foodaidnetwork.org.uk/independent-food-banks-map

Or contact your local council who can tell you where the nearest foodbank to you is.



Keeping active

Keeping moving is good for you.

It can help you feel warmer, have a better appetite, sleep better and be in a better mood. You can do things such as cleaning, gardening, walking up the stairs and dancing.

At first, you may feel a bit stiff, or ache. That is OK, but if you feel any pain or are dizzy you should stop and rest. If you keep feeling like that, get advice from your GP.

Exercises

Here are some exercises you can try at home. Have a chair that is strong and does not wobble about. Wear comfortable clothes and sensible footwear.



- **Warm up**

What to do

- Sit at the front of the chair
- Hold the sides of the chair
- March on the spot
- Build to a speed that feels comfortable
- Carry on for between 1 and 2 minutes



- **Wrists**

What to do

- Fold or roll a towel into a tube shape
- Sit tall, then squeeze the towel tightly with both hands, hold and count slowly to 5 then let go
- Do this exercise 6 to 8 times

- **Arm swings**



What to do

- Sit tall away from the chair back
- Place both feet flat on the floor right under knees
- Bend elbows and swing arms from the shoulder
- Build to a speed that is comfortable
- Carry on for 30 seconds

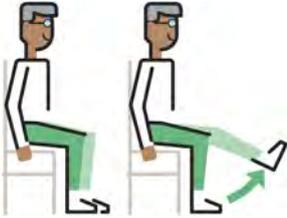
- **Pelvic**

What to do

- Tighten the muscles as if you were trying to stop passing urine and wind at the same time and hold
- Try to hold together for 10 seconds
- Rest for 4 seconds, then do it again 10 times



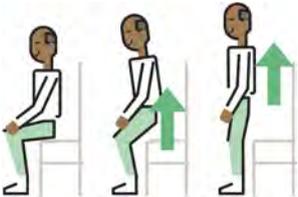
- **Front knee**



What to do

- Sit back in the chair, back supported, feet under knees
- Brush one foot across the floor then lift the ankle slowly and straighten – do not lock your knee – hold for 3 seconds
- Lower the foot slowly – try to take 5 seconds
- Do this 10 times on 1 leg, then swap legs

- **Sit to stand**



What to do

- Sit tall near the front of the chair
- Place feet slightly behind knees
- Lean slightly forwards
- Stand up, put your hands on the chair for support if you need to. After a while you may be able to stand up without using your hands
- Step back until legs touch the chair, then stand tall, bend knees and slowly sit back onto the chair
- Do this 10 times



- **Heel raises**

What to do

- Stand up straight, hold onto your chair, a table or even the sink
- Raise heels taking your weight over the big toe and second toe, hold for 1 second
- Lower heels to the floor slowly and carefully
- Do this 10 times

- **1 leg stands**



What to do

- Stand close to your chair, table or sink and hold on
- Balance on 1 leg, keep your leg straight but knee soft
- Stand tall and look ahead
- Hold for 10 seconds
- Do the same with the other leg

- **Cool down**

What to do

- Stand up and march on the spot, do not go too fast, keep going for 1 or 2 minutes

Instead of the Cool down exercise, you can do this one

- **Thigh stretch**

What to do



- Sit at the very front of the chair
- Straighten one leg, put the heel on the floor
- Place both hands on the other leg then sit really tall
- Lean forwards with a straight back and feel the stretch in the back of the thigh
- Hold for 10 or 20 seconds
- Relax and do the same with the other leg

More exercises



The NHS has exercises and videos for you to follow
Website: www.nhs.uk/live-well/exercise



We Are Undefeatable has advice on exercise for people with long-term health conditions
Website: www.weareundefeatable.co.uk



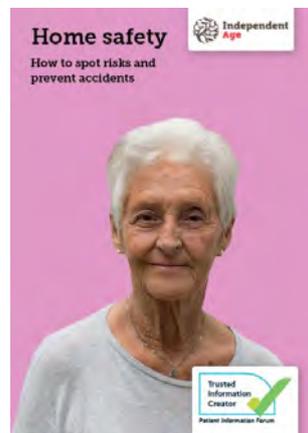
Later Life Training has some strength and balance exercises online
Website: www.laterlifetraining.co.uk/supporting-people-to-be-active-at-home



More information



Independent Age has lots of different leaflets, checklists and guides to give you more detailed help and advice about the things in this booklet. You can download them from our website, or we can post them to you.



The booklet you are reading is the easier to read version of our original Winterwise booklet. We can send you the original version. It is also available in different formats such as large print and audio CD. If you want any of these, please contact us.

Website: www.independentage.org/publications

Email: operations@independentage.org

Phone: 0800 319 6789

