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Winter can be a very frustrating time for many people. Activity level goes down because the temperature drops, days get shorter, and the weather can make it hard to get around. Winter is actually known for being the highest time for being diagnosed with depression, hence “The Winter Blues”. However, what if I told you there are some things anybody can do to “Beat the Blues”? And, what if I told you that it is as simple as taking 25-30 minutes a day to just exercise? It’s that simple! Here’s the catch though. Most people don’t know or understand how to safely exercise in their own homes. I will give you a quick idea of how simple exercise can be to give you the boost you need this winter.

First, you have to forget the concept that exercise has to be done with equipment or in a gym, and it doesn’t need to make you tired. Moderate exercise is also known as “walk and talk” exercise. You should be able to hold a conversation even though you are exercising. This ensures that you are not pushing too hard and causing unnecessary fatigue. And remember exercise is simply “planned activity”. Exercise can be anything! It can be going up and down your stairs, sitting and standing in your chair repeatedly, or just walking laps around your house. The beauty of exercising is you can find what you like, and make it fun.

Second, get yourself moving for those 25-30 minutes! Studies by the Center for Disease Control (CDC) show that daily moderate exercise of 25-30 minutes lowers anxiety and depression, reduces risk of heart and brain conditions, decreases falls risk, and improves overall well-being. All of this is what helps you “Beat the Blues”. Some options I already mentioned are just doing simple stair climbing, repeated sit to stands, or just walking. Some other options include, marching in place, leg kick outs while sitting, pushups (if able), or sit-ups (if able). Remember these should all feel like a moderate intensity, not too hard and not too easy. And they should never cause pain. (Consult a physician or medical provider if pain limits your activity).

Lastly, get your friends involved! Group exercise is shown to improve the psychological benefits of exercise. If the weather permits, meet us with your friends and walk in the mall or at the gym. Or, just give them a call and exercise while talking on the phone. This also helps you stay more compliant with the program, and it gives you a buddy to hold you more accountable. According to the CDC’s *Physical Activity Guide for Americans*, group exercise not only improves your compliance to a program but also your desire to be active. If you want to exercise, it is much easier to stay active, healthy, and “Beat the Blues”.

So remember, all you need to do to “Beat the Blues” is get moving 25-30 minutes of your day! And grab a buddy for a little extra push! It’s that easy!