

**Winter Walking with Nature**

Make short winter walks this season more enjoyable by connecting with nature. Stay active, both indoors and out, and keep motivated by engaging in some gentle exercise. There are some ideas and inspiration below to encourage connections with nature.

**Stay active throughout winter**

As it starts to get a bit colder, it’s more important than ever to encourage everyone to stay active throughout winter. Wrapping up warm for a walk around the garden can boost your immune system and help you to fight off colds! Or a stroll around the home can keep you mobile whilst taking in the frosty winter views from the windows.

**Let’s connect with nature this winter!**

Connecting with nature during the winter season can offer some wonderful opportunities to take in your surroundings, use your senses and take a moment to reflect.

Here are some ideas which can help you to keep active and enjoy some winter activities.

 **Log your steps daily**Use the [Care about Walking charts](https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/walking-for-health/dementia-friendly-walking/care-about-walking) to set your weekly winter walking goals to keep you motivated.

**Themed winter walk and talk**

Take a walk in a small group around the garden or indoors and reminisce about your favourite memory from Christmas time. It could be a song, a particular smell like cinnamon, or seeing the outdoor Christmas decorations.

A taste and smell sensory trail could also be set up around the garden or within the home to allow ‘sensory station breaks’ along the walking route.

**Winter Sensory Box**

Stimulate and engage your senses with seasonal objects to explore – can be done in any open or closed box with a flap. Boxes must be made up individually for each resident. Enjoy as an individual or group activity.

Items can be collected from the garden, including acorns or small twigs. Other items may include, chestnuts, cotton wool balls, Christmas decorations (baubles or felt snowflakes), tinsel, small figurines, or glass pebbles and pom poms.

Use the materials collected for crafting activities afterwards, perhaps creating a winter woodland scene or a wreath.

**Strength and Balance**

Keep moving throughout winter and enjoy some exercises to Christmas music. Sing along to the music and get together in small groups.

**Make you own Bird Fat Balls**

What you will need: lard, pinecones, twine string and bird mix seeds.

1 – Leave a block of lard out to bring it up to room temperature

2 – Clean the pinecones and tie a piece of twine around the bottom of each one

3 – Mix the lard with the birdseed till it all sticks together

4 – Push the fat ball mix between the pinecone scales

5 – Refrigerate until the lard sets

6 – Hang the fat balls in a quiet sheltered area (you can freeze the rest in sandwich bags till needed)

Bird fat balls will attract birds such as blue tits, house sparrows, starlings, magpies, jackdaws and jays. Robins and blackbirds will also gobble these up, but they are mainly ground eaters so will look for the scraps that fall.

**Share your stories**

Thank you for taking part in Winter Walking with Nature. If you would like to share any stories with Paths for All about your experience of taking part, please share these with our [Dementia Friendly Walking](https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/walking-for-health/dementia-friendly-walking/care-about-walking) Development Officer, Kayleigh Lytham by email at Kayleigh.lytham@pathsforall.org.uk.

**Training and resources from Paths for All**

Paths for all believes walking is an easy, effective and accessible way to improve health.

Going for a walk each day can boost physical, mental, and emotional health. Being active helps prevent heart disease, stroke, diabetes, cancer, depression, and dementia. And if people walk in nature, especially with others, these positive health effects are even greater.

We offer training and resources to make walking activities suitable for people in care settings. We have:

[Care About Walking](https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/walking-for-health/dementia-friendly-walking/care-about-walking) resources that include an information booklet, walking wall chart to log steps walked and motivational posters.

[Strength and Balance exercise](https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/walking-for-health/strength-and-balance/health-settings) training, walk stickers, leaflets, and cue cards.

[Walking with Nature](https://www.pathsforall.org.uk/whats-on/event-details/walking-with-nature2021) activity ideas to develop a greater connection with nature to support improved wellbeing.