



WINTER SURVIVAL GUIDE



Created by the Office of Student Life
January 2026

Your Dartmouth & Upper Valley
Guide to **surviving and thriving**
in the Winter Season!

Included in the Guide

1 Winter Driving & Preparedness

2 & 3 Winter Wellness - SAD vs Depressed?

4 How to Have Fun Outdoors

5 Activities: Indoor and Outdoor



Email Kate.e.adams@dartmouth.edu with any questions

Winter Driving and Preparedness

A. Car Maintenance

You can avoid dangerous winter travel problems by planning ahead. Have maintenance service on your vehicle as often as the manufacturer recommends. **In addition:**

- Have the radiator system serviced or check the antifreeze level yourself with an antifreeze tester. Add antifreeze, as needed.
 - Replace windshield-wiper fluid with a wintertime mixture.
- Keep the gas tank near full to help avoid ice in the tank and fuel lines.
- Replace any worn tires, invest in winter tires (with studs, not chains) and check the air pressure in the tires frequently.



B. Items to keep in your car

- Blankets, first aid kit
- Windshield scraper, collapsible shovel
- Booster cables, tool kit, flashlight, and extra batteries
- Bag of sand or cat litter (to pour on ice or snow for added traction)
- **Snow brush in your car so you can thoroughly clean your car off of snow (Fine up to \$500 if negligent of leaving snow on car via Jessica's Law)**



C. Winter Vehicle Operation

Winter driving is often the most difficult due to blowing snow, icy spots, and fewer daylight hours. When you are on the road:



- Roadway conditions may vary depending on the sun, shade, or roadway surface. Watch for slick spots especially under bridges, on overpasses and in shaded spots.



- **Be sure to clear off any snow from your entire car including windows, roof, hood, trunk, etc.** Don't forget to clear off any snow and ice from your headlights and your brake lights. Defog all your windows entirely.

Winter Wellness



A. SAD vs Depression

Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) affects some individuals and the declining light in the fall season can usher in a form of a mood disorder that goes beyond simple winter blahs.*

This form of depression affects approximately 5 percent of the United States' population. It's a combination of the circadian rhythm and the serotonergic and melatonin imbalance that we generally see during the shifting of the sunlight exposure**

The key indicator for SAD is seasonality, with symptoms beginning sometime in the fall, as daylight decreases, and subsiding with the return of light in the springtime.

The following symptoms, when they have a seasonal pattern, are often typical of SAD:

- Increased sadness, hopelessness, crying or irritability
- Change in appetite (especially a craving for sweets or carbohydrates)
 - Weight gain
- Reduction in energy level and sex drive
- Change in sleep/wake patterns (especially a tendency to oversleep)
 - Avoidance of social situations
- Decreased concentration and creativity
 - Difficulty completing tasks



***American Psychiatric Association article**

****American Medical Association article**



Winter Wellness

B. Resources for you to explore through JED

These resources from the JED Foundation below can help you understand seasonal mood changes and ways to protect your mental health:

- [What's the Difference Between Sadness and Depression?](#)
- [How Can I Manage My Anxiety?](#)
- [How to Tell Someone, "I'm Depressed," and Ask for Help](#)
- [How to Build an Anxiety Toolkit](#)



C. Dartmouth, Community & National resources

[Geisel Counseling](#): Free and confidential- 603-653-0045

[DCHS Counseling](#) - Call (603) 646-9442 to make an appointment

[The Tucker Center](#)- Spiritual & Religious support

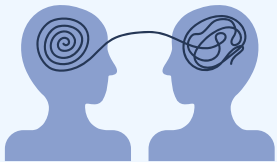
[WISE](#)- Call 866-348-WISE; support for domestic violence, sexual assault & gender- based violence

[National Suicide Prevention Line](#) Call 800-273-8255 for free & confidential support

[Crisis Text Line](#)- Text HOME to 741741 for free 24/7 support

[Veteran's Crisis Line](#) Call 800-273-8255 & press 1

[988lifeline.org](#)- call or text 988 or chat online to trained counselors during a mental health, substance use or suicide crisis



D. Self- Care Ideas to help



1. Get exposure to bright light for around 30 minutes each day (go for a quick walk during lunch or sit by a window during studying).
2. Use a high intensity "light box,". You can reach out to Student Life to request a SAD Lamp.
3. Taking care of your general health and wellness can help—regular exercise, eating enough, getting enough sleep, and staying active & connected (such as volunteering, participating in group activities and getting together with friends & family) can help.

Having Fun Outdoors



WHY

Spending time outside right now provides a welcome relief from stress: studies show that even just 120 minutes per week spent in nature can lower stress hormone levels, boost self-esteem and improve mood.



WHERE

Dartmouth Outing Club Activity Information:

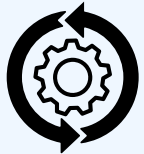
<https://outdoors.dartmouth.edu/activities/>

DOC has a collection of information for various local trips (e.g. directions, difficulty). They're organized by sport and include some winter sports, like back-country skiing.



Oak Hill Outdoor Center

Get your ski pass! Winter's here and we've got world-class cross country skiing right here in the Upper Valley. We've made some great improvements this summer, including a refurbished Top of Oak Hill loop, so get your season pass, or better yet, your Sustainer Pass now, for access to the full 25-kilometer trail system. Help support reliable, accessible skiing for the entire Upper Valley!



HOW

The key principle for dressing for the winter is layering, or wearing a few pieces of clothing on top of each other. Together, these layers work together to keep you warm, and because of the additional insulation of the air trapped between the layers, a set of layers will actually be warmer than the sum of its parts.



Where to find used/affordable items

-Gear Again:

<https://www.vtgearagain.com/>

-Listen Thrift Stores:

<http://www.listencs.org/thrift-stores>

-Outdoor Gear Exchange

<https://www.gearx.com/>

-Other stores in UV: EMS, LLBEAN, STATELINESPORTS

Don't know where to start? You're probably not the only one. **Reach out to Kate.e.adams@dartmouth.edu.**



Activities: Indoor and Outdoor

Check out this guide curated by other
Geisel Students and updated
by Student Life ~2025



Other guides to check out!

Student Wellness
Center
Winter Survival
Guide

Geisel
Connections

 GEISEL WELLNESS	
 Upper Valley Yoga Student Discounts 	
	River Valley Club RVC Discount Membership \$105/month. \$395 Initiation Fee Please provide your ID when you enroll as an RVC Discount Member.
	The Studio in WRJ \$49 Intro Month (30 days) Student Discount- receive a 15% discount. Email us and we can help get you set up! membership@thestudiourv.com
	Upper Valley Yoga New Student Pass \$49 This pass is available to first-time students at UUVY & includes 30 days of unlimited access to livestream and in-person classes, plus free access to our on-demand library.
	Mighty Yoga Student Pass: We offer our Studio+ Membership for \$108/month. Email us to get it set up! Discovery Pass is \$39 30 days of unlimited in-studio classes & live stream classes