

Warming Advice by Lisa Marie Lindenschmidt

I was born in Georgia where the temperatures range from hot to dang hot. That's it. No real variable to speak of. I can't remember ever wearing a hat as a kid. Actually, I remember complaining once that I was chilly and someone suggesting that I put on a hat to stay warmer. I stood there, utterly confused, trying to figure out how anyone could contemplate wearing a hat after spending 45 minutes spraying their hair. (When I was a teenager, proper hair placement was imperative.) Maybe that's why more people use hairspray in the South.

As you can imagine, when I moved to Maine, I had a bit of a climate shock. I've been here for 15 years and am still adjusting... though it's gotten a bit easier. Last winter was my first winter as a raw foodist and I've learned some valuable lessons about staying warm.

Are you wearing enough clothes?

OK, this may seem logical, but I'll walk around my house in the winter in shorts and a t-shirt and hear myself complaining about being cold. We keep the heat between 68 and 70, so that should be pretty livable. I finally decided to try out that hat advice and put one on with my shorts and t-shirt. It really works! Now this may only be a solution for those with shaved heads, so find your own article of clothing that may be missing and give it a shot. Rarely is our entire body cold; it's usually just one part. So, take care of warming that one part and the rest will usually follow.

Are you moving around?

Most of us are not getting enough exercise. I know I'm not. If I've been sitting at the computer for a while and getting a bit chilly, I'll get up and do some jumping jacks or Breaths of Joy (fantastic yoga movement for increasing your heart rate). We weren't meant to be sitting at computers for hours at a time or watching TV all day. Your body wants to move around. Make sure to continually honour your body by doing just that!

What are your thoughts?

This is huge for me. If I'm cold, my immediate, habitual response is to complain. Our bodies don't want to be cold. They love being warm and pliable. They love freedom of movement and not being constricted by massive amounts of down and wool. When we get cold, we sometimes get cranky. But getting cranky means that you are energetically stagnating. When you choose to hold onto a negative emotion or thought, you are blocking movement of energy and are mirroring yourself in the "crank." Make the decision to have another response. When I get cold now, I purposely jump up and laugh and say, "Wow! It's brisk! This is awesome!" I focus on appreciating the cold to better appreciate the warmth. I work on feeling grateful for this change in weather to deepen my relationship with the Earth. In the beginning, you may feel silly, and that's OK. Silly is better than cranky.

What are you eating?

I leave food for last. I am changing my relationship to food and have to be careful not to rely on food to do my work for me – even warming me up. Having said that, there are several foods and drinks you can work with to help keep the blood flowing in the colder months. Teas are a

fantastic way to warm up and get medicinal herbs into your body. Purposely choose teas that will benefit your body. Learn more about herbs and their properties and explore some different combinations. Miso soups are also a great way to warm up and satisfying that savory food craving. Generously add warming spices to your foods like cayenne, turmeric, ginger, garlic, black pepper, cardamom, cinnamon, nutmeg, and cloves to open up those blood vessels! There are also some foods that warm the body because of the energy needed for digestion. These include root vegetables, walnuts, and dates. (Check out Karen Knowler's article, "How to Make Raw Food Taste HOT!": http://karenknowler.typepad.com/living_in_the_raw/2006/10/how_to_make_raw.html for more delicious ideas!)

Winter can be challenging for a lot of people. Find the joy in this season and celebrate the differences in Nature and in you during this time of year.

Lisa Marie Lindenschmidt is a raw foods chef and teacher and owner of Rite Food and Company (www.ritefoodandcompany.com), which offers workshops on intentional and joyful eating. Lisa Marie and her homeschooled daughter, Mo, record a weekly podcast – called Sweet Peas Podcast – chronicling their raw foods journey together.