

Sensory Approach to a Seasonal Wellbeing Checklist

(Designed for Autistic & otherwise Neurodivergent bodies, brains, and nervous systems)

All-Year Foundations

- Notice your sensory “weather” before the physical weather.
- Build small, (predictable) routines that anchor your day.
- Allow rest without guilt or justification – especially during transitions.
- Communicate your access needs early (even to yourself).
- Prepare and accommodate for sensory unpredictability: allergies, winds, noise.
- Stay informed about weather forecasts to better prepare for extreme heat days.
- Connect with community resources or groups for support and shared coping strategies.

(We acknowledge many of these seasonal suggestions come with financial privilege).



Sensory & Emotional Reconnection

- Ask: What does my mind & body need today – not what the season expects of me (by this we mean environments we are in)?
- Offer yourself softness around transitions.
- Track patterns (energy, sleep, sensory load) without judgment or expectations of yourself – not all of us find this exercise beneficial or doable.
- Let every season be a chance to listen and rewrite your rhythms.
- Practice mindful breathing to connect with the present moment.
- Spend time in nature to ground your senses.
- Create a calming ritual that helps you unwind each day.
- Regularly check in with your emotions and acknowledge them.
- Allow space for creativity to flow without pressure or expectation.



Summer (Heat, Light, High Stim)

- Sunglasses, hats, UV clothing or shade-finding strategies.
- Cooling tools: spray bottle, cold cloth, frozen fruit and drinks, ice packs, fans, air conditioners.
- Integrate water-based activities for tactile enjoyment and temperature control.
- Adjust plans around peak heat for sensory regulation and management of cooccurring conditions.
- Embrace early morning or late evening activities to enjoy cooler temperatures and quieter environments.
- Plan indoor, climate-controlled activities like visiting a museum or watching a movie during the hottest hours.
- Hydration reminders (apps, alarms, visual cues).
- Avoid or minimise bright, crowded spaces if and when possible.
- Choose breathable textures + fabrics when possible.
- Create a sensory-affirming summer playlist to soothe or energize as needed.
- Incorporate calming sensory input like gentle scents or soft lighting in your living space.
- Practice mindfulness or relaxation techniques to manage stress and maintain a sense of calm.
- Schedule downtime to avoid burnout from increased social activities.



WINTER

SPRING

SUMMER

AUTUMN

Autumn (Transitions, Temperature Changes)

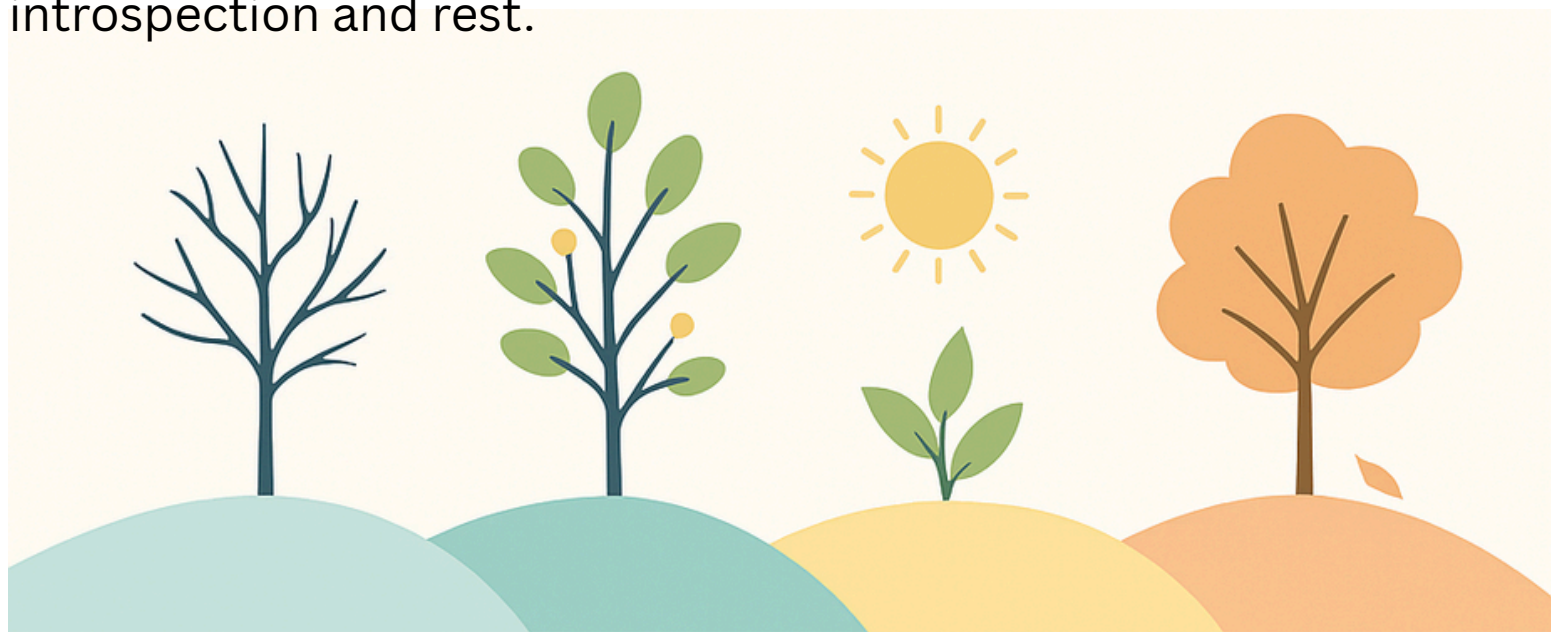
- Slowly adjust routines and transitions rather than sudden changes.
- Re-evaluate energy levels as daylight shifts.
- Ensure you have adequate layers for fluctuating temperatures, both indoors and out.
- Notice texture changes in clothing & swap gradually, where possible.
- Keep weighted or grounding items nearby.
- Create a cosy, sensory-affirming inside space.
- Incorporate warm, comforting scents like cinnamon, nutmeg or vanilla through candles or essential oils, unless you are sensory avoidant.
- Sensory seekers can enjoy engaging taste senses in seasonal foods that nourish and warm, such as soups and roasted vegetables.
- Stay connected with nature by taking mindful walks, observing the changing colours the soothing sounds of rustling leaves or rain with mindful listening.
- Plan indoor activities that promote relaxation and creativity, like reading or crafting.
- Reflect on personal growth and set intentions for the coming months.



WINTER SPRING SUMMER AUTUMN

Winter (Cold, Low Light, Low Energy)

- Soft, warm textures that feel good on your skin, but don't constrict your movements.
- Layer clothing to manage temperature changes when moving between indoors and outdoors.
- Light sources that mimic daylight without the harshness. Use light therapy lamps to counteract reduced daylight and boost mood.
- Incorporate warm, comforting foods and drinks into your routine.
- Lower your expectations of yourself (and the expectations of those around us) – winter naturally slows many of us.
- Find indoor activities that promote movement and creativity, such as yoga or crafting.
- Move gently: stretching, rocking, slow walks, dancing or stimming for warmth.
- Stay connected with friends and family to combat feelings of isolation.
- Embrace the season's coziness with blankets, hot beverages, and warm lighting, heat packs, or fingerless gloves for regulation.
- Find joy in the quiet and stillness of winter, using it as a time for introspection and rest.



WINTER

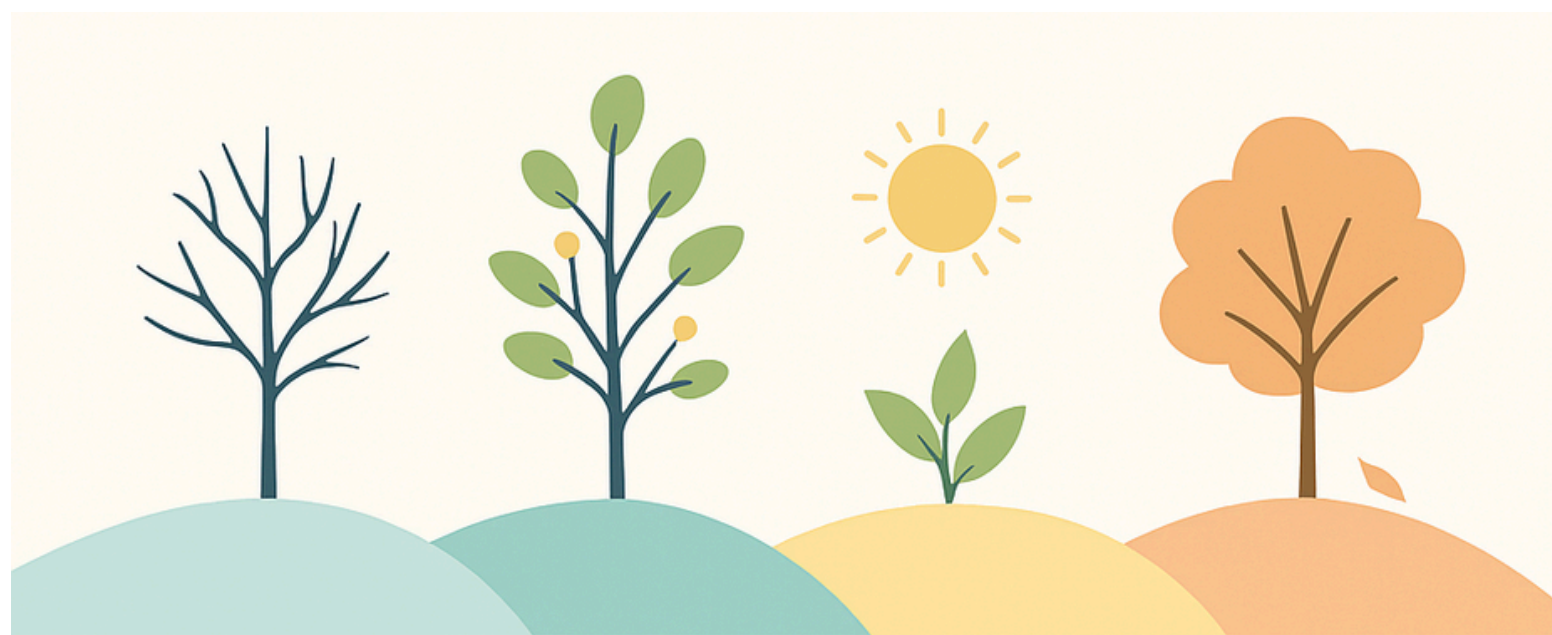
SPRING

SUMMER

AUTUMN

Spring (Renewal, Growth, Longer Days)

- Gradually introduce more outdoor activities as the weather warms.
- Incorporate colourful and vibrant visuals into your environment to uplift mood, experiment with light, and align with the season's sense of renewal.
- Prepare for sensory unpredictability: allergies, winds, noise.
- Monitor allergies and prepare with necessary medications or preventive measures.
- Reassess goals and routines, allowing for flexibility as energy levels rise.
- Limit social commitments if change feels overwhelming.
- Celebrate the return of vibrant colours and life by engaging in gardening or nature-based hobbies.
- Take advantage of longer daylight hours to adjust your sleep schedule gently.
- Plan for sensory-friendly adventures to enjoy the blossoming surroundings.
- Keep comfort items in your bag or car.
- Use grounding sensory input: deep pressure, scent anchors, fidgets.



WINTER

SPRING

SUMMER

AUTUMN