

Winter Wellbeing



6 top tips to help you keep your heart healthy

According to the British Heart Foundation, colder temperatures can affect your circulation and put extra stress on your heart.

This can cause:

- the heart rate to increase
- an increase in blood pressure
- the heart to work harder than usual
- our blood to thicken, which in worst cases can lead to blood clotting.

"The cold weather takes away your body heat so your heart needs to work harder to keep you warm"

Get in touch

For more helpful tips on how you can keep your heart healthy, **visit the British Heart Foundation website (www.bhf.org.uk)**, or speak to your doctor. Your Owl Protection Adviser will be happy to provide you with a reminder of well-being services available as part of the insurance cover they have arranged for you.

We've collated some top tips to help you keep healthy this winter.

01 Layer up

It's recommended you wear lots of thin layers, rather than one thick layer. This will trap the heat in and keep you warmer. If possible, keep the room where you spend most of your time heated to at least 18°C. Layer up with socks, jumpers and blankets and, if you have one, use a hot water bottle or electric blanket.

02 Keep moving

To help build your core temperature and boost your immune system, try to keep moving and exercise as much as possible. Make it fun! Whether it's dancing in the kitchen, playing a team sport or just walking up & down the stairs, exercise can help both your mental and physical well-being.

03 Healthy eating

Eating a healthy balanced diet that includes at least five portions of fruit and vegetables per day can help your immune system to work well. Try to include green vegetables and omega 3, from oily fish.

04 Fresh air and sunlight

Make a point of getting some fresh air, e.g. by going for walks or spending some time in the garden. Getting outside is also a good way to boost our levels of vitamin D, as it's made through our skin when we are outdoors in daylight. It also helps if you think you might experience low mood during the winter season. As sunlight levels in the UK are generally low from October to March, taking a daily vitamin D supplement in these months can be helpful.

05 Fluid intake

Try to drink as much water as possible and reduce alcohol intake. If you do enjoy a festive drink, aim to balance this with drinking non-alcoholic fluids, ideally water.

06 Mental Health support

If you're feeling lonely or overwhelmed, there are many support services to help. Policies arranged through Owl typically come with mental health support, such as counselling / helplines, as an added benefit. Contact your Owl Financial Protection Adviser for more details or get in touch with your insurer directly.

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5 steps to create a budget

The average British family used to be 2.4 children, these days it's 1.7 children (and half a dog). Whether your idea of a family is two adults and two children, or just you and a dog, creating a family budget is an essential step towards managing your finances effectively.

By gathering information about your income and expenses, categorising your expenses, setting financial goals, determining your disposable income, and creating a budget plan, you can take control of your finances and achieve your financial goal.

01 Make a list

Make a list of all your average monthly outgoings, then compare it to your current income and see if you spend more than you earn. If there is money left over every month, then it's easier for you to add this to savings. If you earn less than you spend, try to cut back on your expenses slightly.

02 Set realistic goals

Set yourself short and long-term financial goals. Short-term goals should take around one to three years to achieve and might include things like setting up an emergency savings fund or paying credit card debt. Long-term goals, such as saving for retirement or your child's education, may take decades to reach.

03 Follow the 50/30/20 rule

Once you've identified your monthly income and expenditures, it's worth using the 50/30/20 rule. This is a technique where you divide your income into three categories. 50% of your budget covers any essentials like rent and bills, 30% covers variable costs like eating out and shopping and 20% covers savings and paying off debts.

04 Cut back on nice to haves

We are all guilty of enjoying the finer things in life, but identifying what nice to have items you can cut back on can help you achieve your financial goals quicker. For example, cutting back on eating out may only save you a small amount each month, but can be a huge saving in the long term. You may be surprised by how much money you could accumulate by making one minor adjustment at a time.

05 Review your budget regularly

Once you have created your budget, don't forget to review it from time to time, especially as the cost-of-living crisis is beginning to catch people out with rising prices. By checking it frequently, you'll see whether you need to adjust your goals and where you could still cut back on your expenses.



Get savvy against financial scammers

Retired teachers Paul and Mary are devoted parents and grandparents to their three children and eight grandchildren.

As their family started to grow, they decided they wanted to begin saving for their grandchildren's future. Disappointed with the returns from their savings accounts, they decided to look into other investment opportunities. After comparing a number of companies online, they settled on one and made a £30,000 bank transfer. Within just a few months, their initial investment had grown sizably.

Soon afterwards, their eldest grandchild passed his driving test. They decided they'd like to buy him a car, so they made a withdrawal. Being able to do this so easily cemented their trust in the investment company. Over the next year, they made several more deposits.

Paul and Mary then agreed they'd like to help one of their children with a deposit for a house. However, when they tried to withdraw most of their original investment, they couldn't access their money or get through to the company by phone, email or any other means. It was at this point, they realised they'd been scammed.

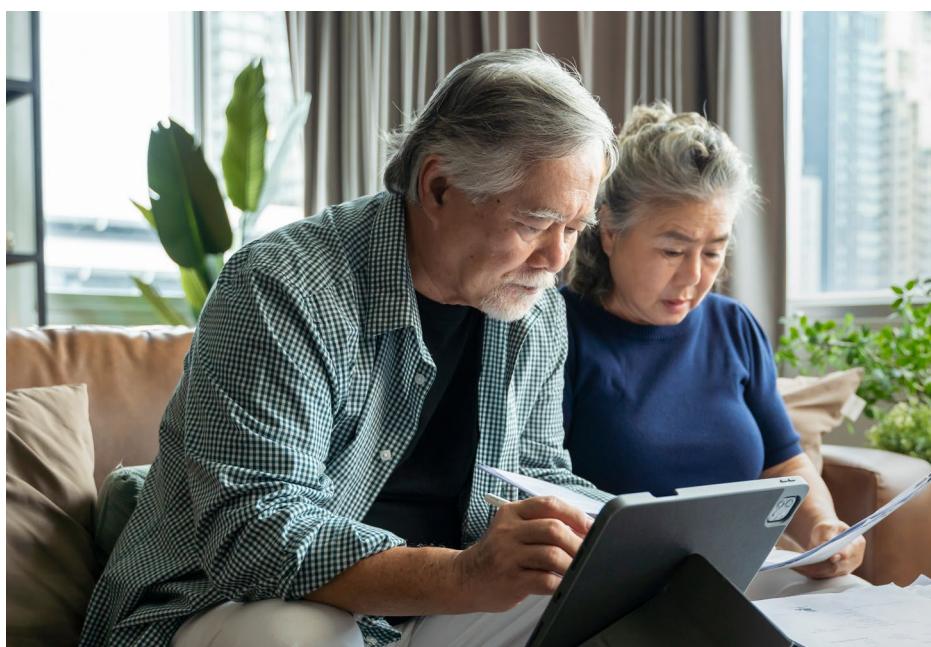
On top of wiping out most of their life savings, the scam took a toll on the couple's mental health. They both suffer from feelings of embarrassment and guilt, and Paul has developed severe depression.

Anyone can fall victim to a financial scam

Although Paul and Mary feel foolish, financial scams can be extremely sophisticated and trick the savviest of us. We're used to hearing stories about elderly and vulnerable people being conned but recent research by Lloyds Bank found 18 to 24 years olds are most likely to fall victim to investment scams, making up approximately 25% of all cases. And, in fact, victims aged under 45 account for 70% of all reported investment scams.

Types of financial scam

Financial scams take many forms including high-return investment opportunities, like the one Paul and Mary fell for, pensions transfers and health insurance supplements. Criminals use phishing (emails) or smishing (texts) to impersonate trusted organisations and trick people into giving away their personal information or money.



Top tips to avoid being scammed

1. Follow the advice of UK Finance's Take Five to Stop Fraud campaign

- **Stop:** Take time to stop and think before parting with money or personal information.
- **Challenge:** It's OK to refuse or ignore requests that make you feel uncomfortable. Only criminals will try to rush or panic you.

- **Protect:** Tell your bank immediately if you think you've fallen for a scam and report it to Action Fraud.

2. Great deals don't come looking for you

Scammers often advertise on social media and the internet. They may also send 'deals' by email, phone, or direct message

3. Make sure it's genuine

As in Paul and Mary's case, scammers can easily set up fake companies, profiles and websites. Don't underestimate the lengths a fraudster will go to in order to convince you they're genuine. Before parting with any money, it's a good idea to seek professional advice. You can also use the FCA website to check the details of financial services companies.

4. Protect your payments

Consider your payment method. It's very hard to get money back if you pay by bank transfer. Paying by card offers the greatest protection.

Become Scam Savvy

For helpful advice on how to protect yourself from financial scams, visit the Financial Conduct Authority website. It's also worth checking out the 'Take Five' website for more information on scams in general, as well as the Citizens Advice website. The key thing is to pause and think if you're unsure. If it seems too good to be true, it probably is. Owl Financial adheres to a strict Data Protection Policy.

How to protect your mortgage

Strengthening your ability to keep up with mortgage payments is important and will give you some peace of mind if your circumstances change.

Life insurance is the form of protection most of us would name as one that could pay down or pay off a mortgage. Yet there are other situations (apart from death) that could mean it's very difficult or even impossible to keep up with mortgage payments for an extended period – without the help from other types of coverage.

Here are some protection policies you might want to have in place (alongside life insurance) to give your mortgage some security if you are unable to keep up with mortgage payments. Your adviser can help you work out the best option for your situation.

- **Critical illness protection** pays out a one-off, lump sum if you're diagnosed with a critical condition or disability that is covered by your policy. It can be offered when you buy life insurance, as extra coverage.
- **Income protection** pays out a percentage of your monthly income if you are unable to work due to illness, an accident or disability. Depending on the terms, you'll receive a regular income until you either return to paid work, retire, pass away or if the policy term comes to an end.
- **Mortgage payment protection insurance (MPPI)** pays your monthly mortgage payments if you're unable to make them due to an accident or illness.

It's always good to hear expressions of thanks following claims payments made by insurers we work with. Here is an example sent to one of our Executive Sales Managers. The claim payment received meant the family's mortgage could be paid off.

**"Words cannot express how grateful we are for your help!
Your kindness has not gone un-noticed... Thank you for
helping us when we needed it the most"**

What's the difference between income protection and MPPI?

Income protection insurance is seen as more comprehensive than MPPI as it covers a proportion of your income and not just your monthly mortgage payments. It could also help to cover monthly bills aside from your mortgage. The period you're protected with income protection tends to be longer than MPPI, too.

Your adviser will help you find a policy that works for you and your needs, in terms of the length of cover you want and how much the premium might be. MPPI premiums could be lower than those for income protection and more affordable.





4 good reasons we should all be considering health insurance



Waiting Times

Nearly 8 million people are on NHS waiting lists and the number forced to wait more than 12 months for treatment has soared over 330,000. Avoiding waiting times is one of the biggest draws of health insurance for many. Having time out from normal life due to an illness is hard enough, imagine waiting so long to even begin treatment.



Breakthrough Treatments

If you or your family were seriously ill, you would want the absolute best treatments, medicines, facilities and consultants for them. Private Medical Insurance (PMI) offers access to some breakthrough treatments which are not yet available on the NHS, due to cost - even for cancer. It also offers access to the best hospitals and consultants in the country and the flexibility to choose where and when you would like to receive treatment.



It's probably cheaper than you think

Many clients are surprised to find that health insurance policies are much more accessible than they imagined. We work with expert advisers who can find the perfect policy to suit your budget and can find affordable premiums for your specific circumstances. The expert advice you receive is completely free, no obligation and they offer a price match guarantee. Find out what you could save..



Prioritising your health

Many of the day-to-day things we spend our earnings on, would pale into insignificance at the diagnosis of a serious illness or injury for you or your family. If you want to prioritise your health and be proactive about protecting it, health insurance is an affordable and accessible way to do it. Whilst we respect and support the NHS and the hard-working individuals within the organisation, the service is stretched.

Get in touch

Your Owl Financial adviser will be happy to help you find out more about Private Medical Insurance and how it could benefit you. We work with specialists who can advise you and arrange cover.

With you through life®

If you are interested in finding out more about the products and services offered by Owl Financial, please contact your Owl Financial Protection Adviser or email: enquiries@owlfinancial.co.uk



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