

Got the Winter Blues?

Turn it into Your “Winter Arc”

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Parlons-en. **paesf**

While the holiday season can definitely lift the spirits of many, winter has always been characterized as one of the most difficult times of the year. The cold and gloomy weather brings challenges that feel beyond our control, and we may feel hypervigilant about fighting against the seasonal blues, or worse, seasonal depression.

What if there was a way to embrace this season's natural sluggishness rather than fighting it? Winter doesn't have to slow us down. By recognizing how we can incorporate restful growth and development and work with the season's pace, we can positively reframe the season of “winter blues” into creating our “winter arc.”

What is a “Winter Arc?”

Just like how fictional characters retreat, train, and grow stronger before emerging transformed, a “winter arc” is about embracing the slow winter months as an opportunity for self-development, goal-setting, and growth. Winter's lull provides a great opportunity for intentional solitude and focus to build productive habits, and shifting your mindset can change what feels like a stagnant season into a powerful time for personal renewal.

5 Tips on How to Create Your Arc

1. Define the Terms and Rules for Your Arc

As with any plan, you must be clear on your goals and how you will achieve them. Determine a timeline for your Arc. It may be 1-3 months, this is completely up to you. Define the goals you'd like to achieve by the end of your journey. To be realistic, set only up to five goals. These goals should be meaningful to you, no matter how big or small, and be measurable in some way. For example:

1. Daily movement (a stretch, a walk, or going to the gym)
2. Eat more protein (ex. 100g/day)
3. Grow savings account (ex. \$50/week towards emergency fund)
4. Intentional rest & reset routine (ex. Be home by sunset, read 10 pages a day)
5. Daily mental health check-in (ex. 5-minute morning/evening gratitude list)

2. Create a Mission Statement (The Why)

Embody the role of the “main character” during this Arc by setting a mission statement. This will define this period of your life, keep you accountable, and serve as a reminder as to why you're challenging yourself. This statement should reflect your vision and be encouraging. Try to be specific. For example:

“In my winter arc, I will listen to what my body and mind need and honour it the best I can. I will show up for myself every day. I will not abandon myself.”

“In my winter arc, I will remember that I am on a journey to grow into the best version of me. I promise to be committed, but also give myself grace during the difficult moments.”



3. Create a Vision Board (The How)

A vision board is a great way to keep your goals at the top of your mind. The process of creating this - choosing words, images, and symbols - helps further clarify your goals and serves as a motivation. Try to have fun and choose things that make you feel emotional. Display your board somewhere you can see all the time, such as your phone background.

4. Use or Create a Habit Tracker

Similar to the vision board, using a habit-tracking tool provides you with a clear picture of your daily routines and habits. Seeing your progress visually - whether through checkmarks, streaks, or graphs - can easily keep you accountable. Not only does it break down your larger goals into manageable, daily actions, but it also reinforces a positive feedback loop to encourage consistency.

5. Embrace the Season!

The purpose of your “winter arc” is to be intentional about your self-development, and that includes embracing how the winter season can be a powerful ally in achieving these goals. Winter’s slower rhythm and fewer social activities offer more time for rest, recovery, and a more stable framework for establishing a consistent routine.

Just like we would naturally change up our cooking styles and seasonal produce throughout the year, actively embracing the elements of winter into your goals can help you achieve them with more ease.

Transforming the winter blues into your “winter arc”...

Is about reimagining this season as a time of intentional growth, self-care, and preparation. By redefining your relationship with winter, you can harness its natural stillness and rhythm to build routines that align with your long-term goals.

If you’d like more support on letting this season become a turning point of your self-development journey, FSEAP’s counselling services can help. Reach out to your EAP today to learn more.

