

10 REMEDIES FOR CABIN FEVER

1. **Shovel early, shovel often.** Early winter. So exciting! Before the powder turns to ice, before your brain settles into stale-air mush, head out to gawk at fresh small-mammal tracks and silent still-white limbs, and make your paths. Remember to lift with your legs and pace yourself. This is only the beginning.
2. **Go for a run.** Jog gingerly in the icy tire tracks of pickups or the unplowed skiff on the road shoulder while flakes pile on your ball-cap brim and nineteen trumpeter swans glide across the nearby lake. Wave at the neighbors and schoolkids as you pass. You're all in this together.
3. **Schedule no-whining days.** Make a pact with friends. Once a week, you'll spend the day outdoors walking, skiing, swan-watching, hauling firewood—anything, anything at all—together and without complaint. On sunny days, sit hatless on foam pads and share the last of the garden pesto dip. On freezing days, wrap your mittenened hands around a passed thermos lid of tea. (Apple brandy optional.) You'll forget you ever wanted to complain.
4. **Organize.** Midwinter, when weariness encroaches, stay busy! Organize your files, your silverware drawer, the endless, strewn Ziploc baggies of first-aid supplies from summer hikes. Organize a dinner party or a book club or a weekly travel slide show. Who knew your neighbors visited Cambodia in the 1960s, the Galapagos in the 1980s, Panama by canoe, Antarctica with a sled?
5. **Make art.** Paint. Knit. Carve. Sculpt. Scour the web for submission opportunities and send your creations around the world. Note that the range of what qualifies as art grows in direct proportion to the lousiness of the weather and your distance from town. A Halloween mask from wine corks. Fingerpainting. Writing your memoir.
6. **Get political.** Write your congressperson. Sign petitions, or start them. Fight for clean energy, clean air, and clean water. Fight against violence and torture and injustice. Read and write and think and rage. But not at your partner.
7. **"It could be worse."** Late winter, when snow piles toward the eaves (the neighbors board their windows, but not you!), read about Shackleton, read Jack London, or the latest from Elizabeth Kolbert. Flip through photos of icebergs melting, creeks cresting, fires burning, tornadoes spinning. Consider real hardship while soaking in a steaming hot bathtub.
8. **"This is better?"** Visit relatives in LA or Houston and remember there's something nice about driving an ice-free interstate, watching heat ripples rise from asphalt, swapping familiar stories with siblings. (It did *not* happen that way! Did too! Did not!) Remember, too, that there's also something nice about having four seasons back home—snow sifting through the pines, swans on a silent lake.
9. **"This is better!"** Fly to Cancun or road-trip to Moab. The sky is blue, the ocean warm, the red rocks startling, the tropical fish surreal. Feel the sun on your skin—serotonin! endorphins!—and sleep tentless in the sand and remember you're connected to the earth in some nearly inexpressible way. But be forewarned: once you get home, it'll be months before you'll be barefoot again.
10. **Give in.** It's spring, supposedly. Your lettuce seeds have rotted in the ground, your crocuses crushed by slush. That's it. Kick off your muddy boots, and stare at the wall. Even the swans have left town. But wait, is that the sun still streaming in the window at dinnertime? Step onto the porch in your socks and bask in the warm glow.

What would you add to this list? Tell us at www.orionmagazine.org/enumeration.