

Who hasn't experienced the winter blahs? The short days and long nights are too often accompanied by a sense of restlessness or sadness and a shortage of energy. It is estimated that one in eight people experience a mild low mood during winter, with symptoms including lethargy, craving for sugary foods and sleep problems, but not full depression.

So if the short, dark days are getting you down, what can you do to feel like yourself again?



Winter Blues Got You Down?

Harvard study reveals Light Therapy Boosts Mood and Energy Level in Winter

With the change to Daylight Saving Time, days notably start to shorten and the intensity of sunlight decreases. Due to a lack of light in this period people experience mood and energy problems, symptoms that can indicate a condition called winter blues.

The Harvard Medical School recently published a scientific paper¹ that confirmed that exposure to a low level of blue light can be as effective in treating symptoms such as mood swings and low energy levels as exposure to the intense bright white light that is used in traditional light therapy. The specific type of blue light closely resembles the natural light of a blue summer sky and is known to be mainly responsible for regulating our mood, sleep and energy levels.

Winter blues

Winter blues is a condition that affects large groups of people worldwide, especially in countries with long and dark winters. Mood problems and lack of energy typically start in autumn and may

last well into the spring. The condition is more common among women than men: three to four times the number of women than men are afflicted. Depending on a country's latitude, it is estimated that 15 to 20% of the population suffers from these seasonal mood swings. This percentage is somewhat lower for southern countries. An example, the rate of winter blues in the US is 14%, while Finland's prevalence is 18.4%

Common symptoms

The symptoms of winter blues are seasonal and are similar to ordinary ailments: mood and energy problems, fatigue, increased appetite, carbohydrate craving, weight gain, concentration difficulties and sleep problems. As a result of these common symptoms, it could be that the number of people troubled by one or more symptoms of winter blues is even higher than the prevalence data show. The impact on both the physical as well as the psychological well-being of those affected by winter blues can be substantial.

The power of light

Light therapy has proven to be the most effective treatment for fighting the winter blues. Over the past 20 years, many studies involving thousands of patients, have demonstrated the superiority of light for treating winter blues. Scientists agree that winter blues and related problems result from the lack of light and patients respond to light therapy quicker than to other treatments.

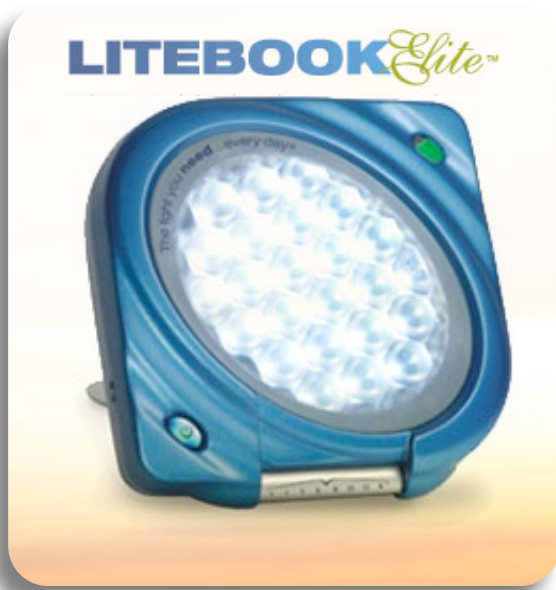
Light therapy at home

Over the years light therapy has become more accessible to a larger group of people. Whereas a few years ago, light therapy was only available in specific institutes and centers, people increasingly use light devices at home for light therapy purposes.

¹ J.L. Anderson, C.A. Glod, J. Dai, Y. Lux vs. wavelength in light treatment of Seasonal Affective Disorder. *Acta Psychiatrica Scandinavica* 2009;120: 203-212

² Levitt, AJ et al. A comparison of open treatment of seasonal major and minor depression with light therapy. *Journal of Affective Disorders* 71 (2002) 243-248

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Natural Medicine :**



Vitamin D - The Sunshine Vitamin

Vitamin D sufficiency is required for optimal health. The conditions with strong evidence for a protective effect of vitamin D include several bone diseases, muscle weakness, more than a dozen types of internal cancers, multiple sclerosis, and type 1 diabetes mellitus. There is also weaker evidence for several other diseases and conditions. The current vitamin D requirements in the United States and Canada are based on protection against bone diseases. These guidelines are being revised upward in light of new findings. In general, the health benefits accruing from moderate UV irradiation, without erythema or excess tanning, greatly outweigh the health risks, with skin pigmentation (melanin) providing much of the protection. In the absence of adequate solar UVB irradiation due to season, latitude, or lifestyle, vitamin D can be obtained from fortified food, oily fish, vitamin D supplements, and artificial sources of UVB radiation. *(Altern Med Rev 2005;10(2):94-111)*

Infra Red Therapies

Far infrared therapy has been well researched and studied for the past 40 years. Studies and testimonials show that far infrared therapy is useful with numerous health issues and ailments but can also be used very effectively as a proactive health tool.

aids in weight loss and control

ONE 30 MINUTE SESSION OF FAR INFRARED THERAPY WILL RAISE YOUR METABOLISM SO YOU BURN MORE CALORIES DURING THE DAY
The body expends energy to produce sweat. As the body works to cool itself while in the Far Infrared saunas or hybrid bed, there is a substantial increase in heart rate, cardiac output and metabolic rate. This means that your body can safely burn up to 300 to 500 calories in just one 30-minute session. While this weight can be regained through re-hydration, the calories burned will not.

boosts mood and helps fight seasonal depression

FAR INFRARED THERAPIES MIMIC THE BENEFITS OF NATURAL SUNLIGHT AND CAN HELP TO REDUCE OR ALLEVIATE SYMPTOMS ASSOCIATED WITH SEASONAL AFFECTIVE DISORDER
During cold dark winters many people get less than 7-8 hours of sunlight per day. If you work inside, you may not see sunlight for days at a time. The consequences of light deprivation are severe for many people and can include an increased risk of metabolic disorders, depression, skin diseases, and allergies.

arthritis, muscle, and joint pain relief

DEEP HEAT HELPS BLOOD VESSELS DILATE, INCREASING CIRCULATION TO MUSCLE AND SOFT TISSUE INJURIES
Increased blood circulation delivers oxygen rich blood to depleted muscles and carries off metabolic waste products, decreasing pain and helping to speed healing. In Europe, radiant heat therapy is widely used to treat patients suffering from many forms of arthritis. Far infrared therapy in Japan has been effective in providing pain relief to those suffering from back pain, sprains, strains, bursitis, fibromyalgia, rheumatoid arthritis, headache, and many other muscular-skeletal ailments.



HYBRID MASSAGE FIR SAUNA BED

heart health

HEART RATE, CARDIAC OUTPUT AND METABOLIC RATE INCREASE, WHILE DIASTOLIC BLOOD PRESSURE DROPS, IMPROVING OVERALL CARDIOVASCULAR FITNESS.
Whole body heating increases blood flow to the surface of the skin and the extremities in order to dissipate heat. This means your heart works harder pumping blood at a greater rate to boost circulation which



Upcoming Events

Haiti Doctors Without Borders Fund Raising

All Sauna or HYBRID Massage bed session proceeds for the month of February will be donated to Doctor's Without Borders (Mediciens Sans Frontieres)

New Web Site

Our new Website is just about finished :) We expect it to be up and running by the end of February
www.oknaturalmedicine.com