

# Five Tips to Help You Cope with the Winter Blues

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It's easy to feel down during these gray winter months. Are the cloudy days and early nights making you feel a bit moodier than usual? You could be living with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), a type of depression that some people experience during a particular season, although, most commonly felt during the winter months. Some of the common symptoms include low energy, excessive sleeping, changes to your appetite or diet, and feeling depressed, sluggish or anxious. If you are feeling these effects, the first thing to know is that you are not alone. Around 10 million Americans are affected by SAD, with women four times as likely to be diagnosed with it than men.

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## Five Tips to Boost Your Mood:

**Chin up! There are ways to help these symptoms and get you feeling more like yourself.**

### 1. A healthy diet

Did you know that maintaining a healthy diet is also beneficial to your mental health? A diet rich in protein, simple carbohydrates, B12 and D can actually help you combat the symptoms of SAD. So, next time you feel low, indulge in your favorite pasta dish to help you feel better. Ensuring you eat meals regularly throughout the day can also help boost your mood and energy levels, so it is important to feed your body, even when you do not have much of an appetite.

### 2. Exercise

Exercising regularly has also been shown to help mental health and fight off some symptoms of SAD. Taking an hour long walk or a yoga or tai chi class are simple ways to get some exercise in while increasing your happiness and decreasing feelings of anxiety.

### 3. Light therapy

During the winter months, most people do not get enough sunlight. A light box is designed to simulate the sun and help to release serotonin in your brain, which is the chemical that helps to regulate mood, well-being and sleep. Using a light box for at least two hours a day can increase your happiness levels and help you get a better night's sleep.

### 4. Good thinking

Did you know that simply thinking more positively can boost your mood? We aren't always aware of how negative our thoughts may be, which can make a situation worse. Being more conscious of your thoughts and actively challenging your mind to think positively can help reduce stress while increasing your happiness.

### 5. Counseling

Sometimes trying to help yourself may not be enough, and that's okay. It can be beneficial to seek help from a professional, especially if you are feeling overwhelmed and don't know where to start. They can guide you through the process of recognizing triggers and work with you to create a plan of action that best suits you.