

How To Fight SAD Naturally This Winter

Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD is a condition that affects up to 10% of people around the nation in some manner.

Typically, the signs mimic those of depression but only occur during the colder, darker months. Symptoms of SAD can include, but are not limited to, energy loss, desire to be left alone, increased weight gain, increased appetite, and difficulty focusing on everyday tasks.

When you have SAD, the experience can be confusing initially. However, after being diagnosed by a medical professional, you'll want to take steps to help restore your mind and body to a happier state, regardless of what Mother Nature has in store.

Some people turn to heavy prescription drugs or attempt to self-medicate with alcohol in order to mask their SAD symptoms. Such coping mechanisms can lead to overlapping health problems and long-term health risks. Instead, consider these natural ways to relieve SAD symptoms and start feeling happier:

1. Live in Sunlight... Or Faux Sunlight

When you're feeling burdened by SAD, you may be tempted to stay indoors in darkened rooms. However, doing so will only fuel your feelings of isolation, loneliness, and gloom. It also will leave you vitamin D deficient, a significant contributor to SAD since vitamin D deficiency has been directly linked to decreased mood, decreased serotonin production in the brain, and other symptoms related to

depression.

Understandably, most of us spend tons of time inside when it's cold, and this leaves us out of sunlight, which is one of the most natural ways to get loads of vitamin D. Yet it's possible to get vitamin D without stepping out-of-doors by using full-spectrum light boxes. These boxes are a form of "light therapy," and this treatment is effective for about eight out of ten people suffering from SAD.

The only precautions for users of specialized light boxes are never to look directly at the light with the naked eye because the light box produces light similar to the sun's rays, and if you are taking any medications, be sure sunlight is not contraindicated.

2. Get Moving

Exercise has been shown to improve mood and can be a boon to your health throughout the winter. Working out in your home, in a gym, or outdoors will improve your overall well-being by boosting serotonin levels to help ward off SAD symptoms. As a bonus, your heart will be healthier, your skin will look better, and your body will feel fitter.

3. Drink More Water

Are you tempted to guzzle caffeine or mixed drinks to alter your mood? Try your best not to give into these cravings. Both will dehydrate you, leaving your body depleted of necessary H₂O. The more dehydrated you are, the less able you will be to think clearly. Carry a water bottle with you so you get at least 8 to 10 glasses of the good stuff per day.

4. Keep Yourself on Schedule

Does your schedule tend to change radically during the winter? Do you find yourself in bed for longer periods of time? Don't sleep your life away; get on a schedule and stick to it. Find a reason to stay up until your bedtime, and then get up at the same time each morning. This will help your body remain on a predictable rhythm.

5. Take a Quick Vacation

If you have the funds to do it, why not take a quick weekend trip to a sunnier spot such as Florida, California or even the Bahamas? Not only will an impromptu vacation lift your spirits, it will also give you a much-needed break from the winter doldrums and SAD.

6. Watch the Carbs

Unless you're doing a lot of exercise, hold back on munching on processed carbs all day. Cravings for unhealthy foods tend to go up when experiencing SAD. Choose your meals and snacks wisely, and add many fruits and veggies to your diet to boost your intake of vitamins.

7. Speaking Of Vitamins ...

Have you forgotten to take your multivitamins? When you have SAD, you need to give your body every advantage possible. The best vitamins to take to ward off symptoms of depression include B complex vitamins and vitamin D. Also consider St. John's Wort and zinc.

The most important thing to do, of course, is to recognize and acknowledge that something is amiss. By taking action, you'll be able to weather the winter naturally.

Recommended Supplements:

- Basic B Complex • 60c – Thorne Research
- Shillington's Brain Tonic
- D – Thorne Research
- Shillington's Female Energy Formula
- Shillington's Male Energy Formula
- L-Tryptophan • 60c- Thorne Research

Further Reading:

- *Natural Remedies for Depression*
- *How I overcame depression naturally*
- *How Candida Leads to Depression, Anxiety, ADHD, and Other Mental Disorders*
- *I'm Depressed*

Sources:

- *6 Ways to Fight Seasonal Affective Disorder* – Greatist
- *7 Signs You May Have A Vitamin D Deficiency* – HuffingtonPost
- Dual Diagnosis Rehab – Best Rehab Center
- *Depression Health Center* – WebMD
- *Vitamins & Supplements Search* – WebMD