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Holistic Tips to Manage Seasonal Affective Disorder

Winter Blues getting you down? Try these natural and holistic methods to manage SAD

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Seasonal affective disorder, or SAD, impacts about 10 per cent of North Americans every year. This winter, don't succumb to the cold-weather blues! Our tips for preventing seasonal depression will give you natural, green alternatives to dealing with the seasonal sadness that comes as the chill sets in.

Holistic Strategies for Fighting the Winter

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Blues

If you're looking for non-pharmaceutical methods for mitigating the depressive effects of SAD, check out these practical, holistic solutions:

1. Sunlight



Even if it's cold outside, exposing your skin to sunlight every day is extremely important to help your body produce vitamin D on its own. Experts recommend exposing yourself to sunlight two hours after rising, even if it's cloudy outside.

2. Bright Light Treatment

If you don't live in a sunny locale, consider using bright light treatment which reduces daytime sleepiness, and improves quality of life.

3. Exercise Routine



Regular exercise is supremely important for reducing the symptoms of SAD by altering brain chemistry (for good), increasing confidence, and creating distraction from everyday worries. Combining exercise with light therapy is equally effective as pharmacotherapy for treating depressive disorders like SAD.

4. Professional Guidance

Working through your SAD with the help of a cognitive behavioural therapist has been shown to be as effective as light therapy. If talking through your depression is better suited to your personality, seek the help of a professional

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to learn techniques for coping with SAD.

5. Diet



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Healthy, complex carbohydrates like fruit and whole grains stimulate the production of serotonin in your brain, a neurotransmitter that regulates your mood. Just be sure not to eat too much of a good thing – no need to add weight gain to your SAD symptoms!

6. Eat Vitamin D-Rich Foods

Getting enough vitamin D in your diet is also important! Check out our article on how to eat your way to happiness with [high vitamin D foods](#).

For many, the severity of their seasonal affective disorder requires more calculated intervention – the kind that only antidepressants can bring. But if your winter blues symptoms are mild, we hope these natural coping mechanisms bring you relief!

About the Author:

Maryruth has been seeking the keys to environmental justice – both at home and at work – for over a decade. With interests that range from green living to green business, sustainable building designs to organic gardening practices, ecosystem restoration to environmental health, Maryruth has been exploring and writing about earth-matters for most of her life. Of special interest is the subject of ecopsychology and the role the natural world plays in the long-term health and well-being of humanity. You can learn more about

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