

First Psychology advises on how to be happy this winter

How to deal with Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) for a happy winter season

The nights are drawing in, and it's only a few days since the clocks changed. While some of us are starting to count down to Christmas, for others it's the start of an unhappy time of a seasonal depression called SAD.

"Many of us feel a bit less energetic during the winter months which is often called winter depression", said Professor Ewan Gillon, Clinical Director of First Psychology Scotland.

"But its more severe form, Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), can lead to strong symptoms of depression and some people may even need professional help. NHS figures show that about two million people are affected in the UK.

"For the majority of us, though, a number of subtle lifestyle changes will help get you through the darker months more happily."

First Psychology's practitioners have compiled their **top five tips to combat winter depression:-**

1. Make time for daylight: spend your lunch hour outdoors or make time for an afternoon walk to ensure you spend some time in daylight.

2. Keep up any regular exercise you do and eat well: while it's tempting to curl up in front of a fire with a chocolate

bar, exercise helps release endorphins which brighten your mood. If possible, exercise outdoors.

3. Work in a well-lit environment such as close to a window, allowing you to enjoy as much daylight as possible.

4. Talk to family and friends: letting those close to you know what is happening to you allows you to build a support network. Making time to meet friends also helps lighten your mood.

5. Book a cheeky week away in the sun or consider re-decorating your home in bright colours which reflect a lot of light

“People with more severe symptoms may find light therapy helpful, and placing a specialist daylight lamp on your desk can make a huge difference to your mood”, explains Ewan Gillon.

“It’s also worth reminding yourself that the days start to lengthen right after Christmas and Spring is just around the corner.”

For more information on low mood and depression, visit www.edinburghtherapy.co.uk.

