

## Winter Blues?

Winter is upon us and many see this season as depressing. [Seasonal affective disorder](#), known as SAD, is a mood disorder (feelings of sadness & depression) that affects healthy people during the winter months. Did you know that 1 in 10 people in the US take an antidepressant? That is certainly not the solution, with all the associated side effects. Here are some non-drug methods to fight the blues:

**Light:** Decreased light exposure decreases [serotonin](#) (hormone/neurotransmitter that helps regulate mood and emotions) levels. So try to get outdoors into the sunlight as much as you can.

**Vitamin D:** Low vitamin D levels go hand-in-hand with SAD. Natural vitamin D production is lowest in winter due to decreased sun exposure. So try to take a daily vitamin D supplement.

**Movement:** Lack of exercise can mimic symptoms of SAD: low energy levels and depression. Try to stay as active as possible, inside and outdoors as weather permits.

**Mental Attitude:** Choose to embrace the winter! The weather can be exciting with big storms, snow in the mountains brings winter [fun skiing, snowboarding](#) etc. [Monster waves on the coast](#). Cozy warm nights by the fire, catch up on reading or work a puzzle. This is truly a wonderful season so enjoy! Be a positive energy source: Negative energy attracts negative results. Keep your own mood positive and suppress negative behavior in others.

Great quote on happiness & laughter:

“Laughter increases secretion of [catecholamines](#) & [endorphins](#), which increases oxygenation of the blood, relaxes arteries, increases heart rate, decreases BP, which has a positive effect on all cardiovascular & respiratory ailments, as well as increases immune system response.” -[Patch Adams](#)

Here is a nice passage about choosing happiness:

**I'll be happy when...** We convince ourselves that life will be better after we get married, have a baby, then another. Then we are frustrated that the kids aren't old enough and we'll be more content when they are. After that, we're frustrated that we have teenagers to deal with. We will certainly be happy when they are out of that stage. We tell ourselves that our life will be complete when our spouse gets his or her act together, when we get a nicer car, when we are able to go on a nice vacation or when we retire. The truth is there's no better time to be happy than right now. If not now when? Your life will always be filled with challenges. It's best to admit this to yourself and decide to be happy anyway. Happiness is the way. So treasure every moment that you have and treasure it more because you shared it with someone special, special enough to spend your time with... and remember that time waits for no one. So stop waiting. Until your car or home is paid off. Until you get a new car or home. Until your kids leave the house. Until you go back to school. Until you finish school. Until you lose or gain 10 lbs. Until you get married or divorced. Until you have kids. Until you retire. Until summer, spring, winter or fall. Until you die. There is no better time than right now to be happy. Happiness is a journey, not a destination. So work like you don't need money, love like you've never been hurt & dance like no one's watching. If you want to brighten someone's day, pass this on to someone special. I just did!