

CANYON RANCH.

CANYON RANCH EXPERTS SHARE TIPS FOR MANAGING SEASONAL LOWS

October 2018 – Just as a plant may wilt when sun is scarce, if you experience seasonal lows – what many refer to as winter blues, or seasonal affective disorder (SAD) – you may be all too familiar with feeling less than your best when gloomy days outnumber bright ones. The cause of this type of depression, which most often strikes in darker months, isn't exactly known – which can make addressing it challenging.

But light is certainly at the root. When time in the sun is limited, mood-influencing hormones and chemicals can be affected. Your levels of vitamin D, a nutrient made by the body when exposed to sunlight, may also dip and contribute to how you're feeling.

It's clear, then, why you may have been told to get outside as much as you can. Your doctor may have also recommended light therapy (also known as phototherapy) – the use of a device that emits close-to-natural light, allowing you more convenient exposure over the course of your day. (More than half of people with seasonal depression who opt for it improve all their symptoms, according to an analysis of several studies.) If you're still not feeling yourself after trying these suggestions, consider exploring additional ways to lift your mood.



1. EXERCISE REGULARLY

Though not a groundbreaking tip for overall wellness, many don't think of working out as a way to improve their seasonal lows – especially when it, along with cold weather, may leave you feeling like you just want to lounge under a blanket. However, studies show that working out alleviates symptoms in people with depression, most likely by stimulating the neurotransmitter norepinephrine, which directly improves mood.

The outcome is thought to ring true for people with winter mood changes, too. Even a single exercise session – at any intensity – can both increase positive feelings and decrease negative ones, according to researchers.



2. EAT WELL

Nutrition is another cornerstone of overall wellbeing, but it may also play a specific role in improving winter doldrums. For example, omega-3s, found in fatty fish and nuts, help keep your brain and nerves healthy, and some studies say that those who consume a diet rich in these fatty acids have less incidence of seasonal lows.

Simple carbohydrates (think sugary cereals, white bread, etc.) may also exacerbate mood highs and lows, due to the fluctuations in blood sugar they cause. Though your feelings may drive you to crave foods that fall outside of your healthy eating plan, do what you can to stay true to it.



3. ENGAGE THE MIND-BODY CONNECTION

Practices such as acupuncture, yoga, guided imagery, meditation and massage can be helpful in improving sleep quality, reducing stress and taming anxiety, all symptoms commonly experienced by people with this seasonal sadness. Work to make one or more of these options a regular part of your lifestyle.



4. HIT "PAUSE"

Sleep enhances mood and alleviates depression, so make getting proper rest a priority, and talk to your doctor if you're having trouble getting your Zzzzs. You might also consider fall and early winter a time to rest. Ayurveda teaches us that doing too much during this time of year can contribute to depression and anxiety. You may also benefit from visiting warm climates in the winter.



5. CONSIDER SUPPLEMENTS AND HERBS

A blood test can determine if your vitamin D levels are low enough to warrant supplementation. Melatonin supplements may also help regulate mood; a change in seasons can alter your natural level of this hormone. Though research on herbs' effect on SAD is limited, they have been shown to help take the painful sting out of depression. St. John's Wort may be effective in mild-to-moderate cases, for example.

Discuss such options with your doctor to see if they are right for you, and ask for a recommendation for a reputable brand – herbs and supplements aren't regulated by the Food and Drug Administration.



6. CONNECT

You may feel withdrawn, but pushing yourself to be around people can help. The positivity of others can truly be infectious, and engaging in social activities like volunteering can both detract your attention away from negative feelings and boost your feelings of self-worth.



7. AVOID ALCOHOL

Some researchers suspect that alcoholics have seasonal patterns to their abuse of alcohol, with misuse worsening during winter months. Even if you don't regularly consume alcohol, consider avoiding it altogether if you're feeling blue, since it can make depressive thoughts worse over time.

About Canyon Ranch®

Canyon Ranch® has been a trailblazer and an industry-leading proponent of the wellness lifestyle since its founding in 1979, operating the world's most celebrated collection of life-enhancement properties, holistic living developments, and complementary brand extensions. Over the past four decades, Canyon Ranch has imparted their integrative expertise to more than 1 million guests on land, nearly 1.3 million at sea and now over 650,000 in the air. Canyon Ranch has wellness destination resorts in Tucson, Arizona and Lenox, Massachusetts. In addition, Canyon Ranch operates the world's largest day spa at The Venetian® & The Palazzo® hotels in Las Vegas, Nevada and 22 Canyon Ranch at Sea® wellness facilities onboard luxury cruise ships: Cunard Cruise Line, Oceania® Cruises, Regent Seven Seas Cruises®, and on Celebrity Cruises®. Canyon Ranch is a 13-time winner of Travel + Leisure's Best Spa Award, an 11-time recipient of the Condé Nast Traveler Best Destination Spa Award, is honored by Town & Country as one of the 'Best Luxury Spas in the World' in their 2017 Spa Awards and is recognized as the 'Best Wellness Program' by Virtuoso's 'Best of the Best' 2017 awards.