

Do you find yourself ready for bed as soon as supper is over this time of year? You're not alone—many of us feel that way after the time change. But winter doesn't have to be something we dread. With a few simple strategies, we can make the most of the season and enjoy it!

Brighten Your Days with Light Therapy

Light therapy can help combat the winter blues by mimicking natural sunlight. Light boxes or lamps produce bright white light that signals your brain, much like daylight does. When choosing a light box, Harvard Health Publishing recommends:

- **Look for 10,000 lux exposure.** (Lux measures light intensity; a sunny day is about 50,000 lux.)
- **Position it correctly.** Keep the box in front of you or slightly to the side, about a foot away. Don't stare directly at the light—read, meditate, or watch TV instead.
- **Use it consistently.** Aim for about 30 minutes of exposure daily. You can break this into shorter sessions.

Lifestyle Tips for a Positive Winter

Oklahoma State University Extension suggests creating a plan to boost your mood long-term:

- Bundle up and spend 15–30 minutes outdoors for sunlight and exercise.
- Maintain a healthy routine of sleep, movement, and nutritious meals.
- Take medications as prescribed if managing depression.
- Limit alcohol, as it can worsen symptoms.
- Stay connected—make plans and follow through.
- Practice self-care and kindness toward yourself and others.

Find the Bright Side of Winter

Psychologist and author Kari Leibowitz encourages focusing on what you enjoy about winter. Make a list of things you look forward to—like lighting candles. Leibowitz notes that when you light candles with the intention of celebrating the darkness, it can transform your experience and give winter a new meaning.

Wishing you a wonderful season filled with new ways to embrace winter! For more information, please contact Tara Solomon-Smith at tsolomon@ksu.edu or 620-244-3826.

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