

Beating the Winter Blues

By Z. Wang



Quote for Thought:

In the midst of winter, I finally learned that there was within me an invincible summer.
~ Albert Camus



KEEP CALM
AND
BE GOOD
TO
YOURSELF

UDC Counseling Center
202.274.6000
Don't delay...call us for an
appointment today!

Van Ness Campus - Bldg 39, Suite 120



As daytime becomes shorter and the temperature keeps dropping, it's that time of year again, and one of your biggest challenges may be getting out of bed in the morning. If you have already noticed disruptions in your sleep, easy fatigue, and change in appetite, you are not alone. Many people feel sluggish and tired during wintertime. However, on most days we still need to do what we can to perform our best at school or work. So, what can you do to boost your vitality to during the cold wintertime? Here are some tips you might find helpful:

Sun Therapy: Getting yourself outside when the sun is shining can help to wake up your body during the day and allows it to adjust to a normal sleep-wake cycle. Light boxes can also be used to restore Vitamin D deficiencies caused by lack of sunlight.

Sufficient Sleep: While you want to be energetic and productive, especially during final exam period, it's also very important to aim for seven to eight hours of sleep per night to let your body and mind get enough rest to restore energy.

Social Interactions: Calling friends to catch up or inviting them for coffee or study groups may contribute to improved mood and combat any winter blues.

Healthy Diet: You may think only coffee can wake you up in the morning. In actuality, foods high in unprocessed carbohydrates and protein, such as quinoa, oats, whole wheat bread, chicken, eggs, tuna, are all good choices for long-lasting energy. Iron and B vitamins may also help boost energy, and you can find them in all sorts of greens, avocado, and beans.

Regular Exercise: Going out for a run on a freezing winter morning might be the last thing you want to do. However, exercising regularly helps you maintain a healthy immune system.

Be aware of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD): Sometimes lethargy can signal more serious winter depression, which affects about 1 in 15 of us. If you would like to speak with a counselor about SAD or winter depression, call the Counseling & Student Development Center at 202.274.6000 to schedule an appointment.

The UDC Counseling Center invites you to join us in spreading CHEER this winter!

CHEER

A Strategy for Beating the Winter Blues

C

Cultivate. Cultivate an **attitude of gratitude**. This season can be overwhelmingly materialistic, but if you focus on giving thanks for what you do have, you are likely to feel more content. Research shows that individuals who focus on gratitude on a daily basis are happier, healthier, more optimistic, and less lonely than those who do not have daily gratitude habits. To develop a habit of practicing gratitude, try writing in a gratitude journal every day for 5 minutes for at least 3 weeks.

H

Help. This season offers a plethora of chances to **help others in need**. Research shows that a simple act of kindness is beneficial to both the giver and recipient of the act. Volunteering, making a donation, or simply showing kindness to others can go a long way.

E

Evaluate. It's an excellent season to **reflect and examine** your personal goals, priorities, and values. Break large goals down into smaller, more manageable ones. Develop a timeline and a way to track your progress. Think about what motivates you to reach your goals, and build some incentives into your plan.

E

Engage. Try to embrace opportunities to **engage with friends and family** and to **stay active**. Withdrawn individuals and those suffering from depression should also make a concerted effort with others despite the desire to remain isolated. Staying active during the winter season is good for you mentally and physically.

R

Relax. Resist the urge to jump on the busy bandwagon. Take time to relax. Resting and enjoying pleasant activities are key to restoring balance and decreasing stress. Enjoy the simple pleasures of the season; savor some hot cocoa, play in the snow, sing some carols, or read a book in cozy PJ's. Now is a wonderful time to **refresh, renew, relax, and restore** yourself as you look forward to the New year ahead.



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