



Work Smart Live Smart

Fighting The Winter Blues

By
Beverly Beuermann-King,
CSP, Stress and Wellness Specialist

The alarm clock goes off, but you would rather roll over and continue sleeping. Sometimes, there are days that you could literally sleep the day away. You get up, look in the mirror and you feel dumpy and grumpy. You go to the cupboard and instead of something healthy to get you started, you search for one of those sugar cereals or you give in and head right for a chocolate bar. You are not sure what is happening, but there are days when life is definitely more of a challenge.'

Reportedly 65% of the Canadian population notices a difference in their level of mood and energy in the fall and winter compared to the sunny days of summer. This decrease in mood and energy colours the way in which we handle the other areas of our life that compete for our energy and attention.

What causes the winter blues?

Research into the direct causes of the winter blues is ongoing. However, the more severe form, called Seasonal Affective Disorder, is thought to be related to seasonal variations in light which negatively impact the production of neurotransmitters and hormones that affect our sleep, mood and appetite.

What are the symptoms related to the winter blues?

The winter blues are usually characterized by varying degrees of sadness, anxiety and energy. Symptoms may also include irritability, a tendency to oversleep, cravings for sweet or starchy foods and possibly weight gain. Winter blues differ from SAD in that the symptoms do not last as long and do not interfere significantly with everyday living.

How do you combat the winter blues?

Since the winter blues may be a result of a lack of light, some of the coping strategies used are to increase our exposure to light.

- Spend more time outdoors during the day - at least 20 minutes twice a day. It doesn't matter if it is a glorious winter morning or a dreary cloudy afternoon

- Arrange your indoor environments so that it receives more natural light. Move your furniture so that you sit near a window
- Install full spectrum lights to lamps and lights

Additional stress busters can reduce the winter blues.

- Eat regularly and nutritiously
- Get regular amounts of sleep
- Exercise - especially if it can take you outdoors
- Deal with stressful situations
- Take a sunny southern vacation

By increasing your exposure to light and monitoring your diet, sleep patterns and exercise levels you will be able to maintain your health, increase your energy and combat the winter blues.

Stress and wellness specialist, **Beverly Beuermann-King** translates current research and best practices information into a realistic, accessible and practical approach through her dynamic stress and wellness workshops, on-line articles, e-newsletters and media interviews and through a collaboration called *Awakening The Workplace*. Visit www.WorkSmartLiveSmart.com for more on Beverly and her wellness work.

©Articles available for reprint – please include source as Beverly Beuermann-King, www.WorkSmartLiveSmart.com

**Bring one of these related workshops to your team -
Combating Depression or
Understanding Mental Illness**

Call Beverly at 705-786-0437 or
Visit **Presentations & Keynotes** at www.WorkSmartLiveSmart.com
for presentation descriptions and outlines.