**Light Boxes and Light Therapy to Combat Negative Feelings**

During the winter months the sun’s rays weaken. The days get shorter. Often the sky is cloudier, too. These short, gray, days can have an adverse effect on our physical and mental health. It’s a time when many people suffer from SAD and the winter blues. Light therapy can be the answer.

**What Is Light Therapy?**

Light therapy is a process of exposing your body to light on a regular basis. For some time scientists didn’t understand why light affected people. However, the presence of SAD and winter depression indicated that light was very important to many people.

Over the past few years the medical community has learned about vitamin D. Exposure to sunlight triggers your body to create vitamin D. This vitamin is essential for physical and mental health.

Our bodies are also reliant on circadian rhythms. This is your body’s natural response to light and dark. When it’s dark, your body is triggered through the release of hormones to sleep.

When it’s light, you wake. However, many people’s bodies struggle with hormonal balance during the winter months. Light therapy helps balance hormones and strengthens those circadian rhythms.

**How to Find Light Therapy**

Light therapy can be accomplished in a number of ways. The most basic way is to make sure you get twenty to thirty minutes of sunshine each day. However, if the sun isn’t shining then that can be a challenge.

Another option is to purchase or make a light box. They’re available on many home goods websites, medical websites and even in your local big box store. For example, you can buy a Philips Light Therapy box on Amazon for around $130 dollars.

You can also purchase full spectrum light bulbs and use them in a lamp at home. The key, however, is to make sure you use them every day. Expose yourself to full spectrum light for thirty minutes minimum. Full spectrum lighting is about half as strong as the sun’s rays.

You can also purchase a handy tool called a dawn simulator. This ‘alarm clock’ gradually lightens your room to simulate morning. If you struggle to wake when it’s dark outside, you may benefit from this device.

Your doctor can also prescribe light therapy which can be done inpatient in some cases, or you can take a light box home. If your insurance covers it, you can save some money.

**Using Light Therapy**

Use your light box or light therapy daily. Some experts recommend placing the light above your head, like the sun. If you’re unsure, read the directions or ask your doctor. Most light boxes are designed to sit on a table.

Make light therapy part of your daily routine. For example, sit at the table during lunchtime or breakfast with the light box on. If possible, begin using it before the winter depression or sadness hits. Be proactive.

Light plays an important role in the body’s physical and mental wellbeing. If you struggle with sadness and depression, consider purchasing a light box or making one yourself. A basic box ranges in price from $40 to $200 and they’re readily available. Your mental health is worth it!