

Novemburr!

November is the time of year when the temperature drops and the winter coats come out of hibernation. The days get shorter and the sun spends less time in the sky. Before the dark skies and cold air dampen your mood this year, try following some of these easy tips to lighten your outlook:

- **Watch your sugar intake:** With winter soon approaching, one's body may want to store more calories in preparation to 'hibernate' over the next few months. By watching what we eat, especially the extra sugary goodies that lurk around every corner, we can combat the extra pounds that many gain during the holidays between October and January.
- **Add Omega-3's to Your Diet:** This natural, anti-inflammatory molecule is said to do wonders for emotional health by elevating and stabilizing mood. Omega3's occur naturally in foods such as fish, eggs, and flax seed oil, however, it can also be found in supplement form.
- **Give Back to Your Community:** A sense of purpose and an act of altruism can be a great antidote for depression. Volunteering for a local community organization can be an excellent way of connecting with your community while also helping you feel needed and good about yourself.
- **Go to the Gym:** Just because it's cold outside doesn't mean you can't still exercise! The gym is a temperature-controlled way to get out the aggravation of a hectic day on a treadmill or find your inner peace in a yoga class. Regular exercise is proven to help heighten and stabilize endorphin levels and improve your overall mood.
- **Wear Bright Colors:** Just because it's dark outside doesn't mean your wardrobe has to be dark as well. Many studies over the years have implicated that bright colors can reflect a bright mood. Even if you aren't feeling particularly bright on the inside that day, the brightness on the outside may prove beneficial.
- **Force Yourself Outside:** Even though it's freezing outside, go out in the sun for at least 15 minutes of exposure a day. Direct sunlight, even on overcast days, provides your body with Vitamin D and other essential nutrients and can help aid in emotional regulation.
- **Hang Out With Friends:** Many of us tend to isolate ourselves when we're feeling particularly down. Unfortunately, isolation tends to only exacerbate depression. Spending time with friends keeps you feeling connected and can help you feel validated, encouraged, and inspired.
- **Take up a Project:** When it gets too cold outside to work on your outdoor projects, start on something indoors! Utilize your free time to get things you've been putting off done around the house. Cleaning out your attic, reorganizing a room, or painting your kitchen are just some ways to stay busy and feel accomplished. Not to mention the enjoyment you'll get out of the finished product.
- **Challenge Yourself:** What better way to lift your mood and rally the attention of your brain than learning to do something new? Whether it is taking up a hobby like scrapbooking or finally getting around to writing that book you always wanted to. Keeping your mind occupied and alert is a guaranteed way to keep your mood elevated.