

5 Ways to Light Up Your Life

With all of these gray days lately, it is easy to let your mood dim as well. There's even a type of depression called "Seasonal Affective Disorder" that affects people who are sensitive to sunlight (and lack of it). If you find that the weather is making you feel gray as well, try these 5 simple things that can help you light up your life:

1. Use real lights: for those of us who seriously get down when the sun takes a vacation, there are special lights available called "lux lights." Sitting in front of them for a few minutes per day can really turn depression around. Lux lights are becoming more popular and are now widely available from retailers such as eBay and amazon.com.
2. Laugh it up: one sure-fire way to beat the blues is to counter them with laughter! You cannot be depressed and laughing at the same time. What cracks you up? Save jokes, emails, websites and a list of movies and TV shows that make you guffaw. Refer to them any time you need a lift. One of my favorites is spamusement.com.
3. Pamper yourself: take some time out of your daily routine to do whatever it is that makes you feel special. Go have a manicure, a massage, buy that item that you've been wanting for a while, have lunch with a special friend. Taking time out for yourself is guaranteed to give you a lift.
4. Connect: we tend to go inside when the weather is cold and gray, but the isolation can add to the blues. It's important to stay connected to those who support us and help us feel happy. Whether it's on the phone, in person, over the Internet or even in prayer, feeling connected to others is essential for our well-being.
5. Move it: many people take a break from exercising in the winter and start up again when "swimsuit season" looms. However, exercising produces natural feel-good hormones called endorphins that can help boost your mood and manage stress. It's tough to get up when you're down, but exercising is one guaranteed way to feel better fast!

So the next time the weather is getting you down, try one of these simple exercises. One or more may work well for you, and you'll be putting light back in your life as well as those around you!