

Shorter Days Survival Guide

Turn on lights before it gets dark.

Begin turning lights on in your house 15-30 minutes before it gets dark outside. Notice if you enjoy cozy lighting, such as candles or lamps, or if you enjoy bright lights. Notice if it feels better to have one room lit up or your whole house. Give yourself permission to change your preference each day. See what impact it has on your mood.

Save projects for the evening.

Plan to work on a project after it has gotten dark outside. This will give you something to look forward to and fill the evening time. It could be a serious or fun project, hobby, or task. Or set aside the time to connect with family or friends by phone, online, or by writing them letters/cards.

Invest in a sunlight lamp.

Sunlight lamps (also known as SAD lamps or light therapy boxes) are effective treatments for Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD), which many midwesterners struggle with.

Get outside everyday.

Aim to spend at least 15 minutes outside everyday. Natural sunlight can boost your serotonin and lift your mood. Remember what Sir Ranulph Fiennes said "There is no bad weather, only inappropriate clothing." Getting outside each day also helps us adapt to the new season faster.

Exercise & Sleep

Remember that exercise can boost our serotonin and lift our mood. It can also help regulate our sleep--especially strength training.

You may find you want to sleep more during the winter. Ask yourself if your body truly needs more sleep or if it is seasonal depression affecting you. Consult with your physician or therapist if it is depression.