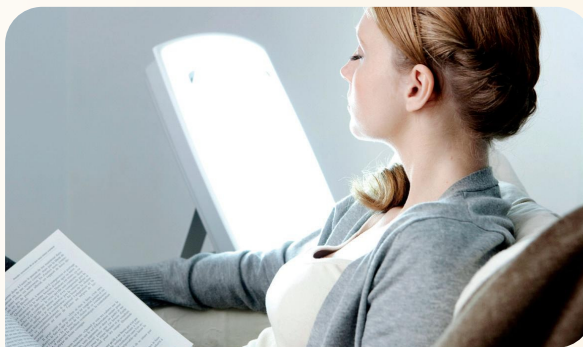


## Shining Through Shorter Days: Coping with Less Daylight

As the days grow shorter in the final months of the year, our exposure to natural sunlight decreases. This reduction can disrupt our biological rhythms and lower vitamin D levels, both of which may negatively impact our physical and mental health. For some, the effects are significant enough to be diagnosed as seasonal affective disorder (SAD), a condition **more common in young adults, women, and individuals with a family history of depression or bipolar disorder.**

Awareness is the first step toward managing SAD. **Persistent sadness, anxiety, fatigue, sleep disturbances, unexplained physical pain or digestive issues, irritability, trouble concentrating, or appetite changes lasting more than 2 weeks** could indicate your body is reacting to decreased daylight. Recognizing these signs early allows for proactive intervention.

**Light therapy** is one of the most effective treatments. Devices like light boxes, wearable visors, or pre-dawn simulators can mimic natural sunlight and help reset circadian rhythms. These tools are often used on a set schedule to maximize benefits.



Other strategies include increasing **outdoor activity during daylight** hours, taking a **vitamin D** supplement, and increasing vitamin D intake with diet, **psychotherapy**, or using **prescribed antidepressants**.

If you think reduced sunlight is affecting your mood or well-being, **consult your doctor** to discuss the possibility of seasonal affective disorder and explore treatment options.



## Humidifiers vs. Dehumidifiers

If you are trying to understand the difference between humidifiers and dehumidifiers and are somewhat confused, you are not alone. Read on to clear up the confusion and ensure your home's humidity is at optimal levels.

Since cooler temperatures and drier air will be here for many areas soon, let's begin with humidifiers. **Humidifiers add moisture to the air**, so they are typically used when the air is drier. They are most useful when heaters or air conditioners are running and drying out the air in your home. Good air quality and appropriate humidity levels are beneficial for dry skin, chapped lips, and irritated nasal passages, making breathing easier when you have a cold or flu, and help prevent snoring by moistening your throat and nasal passages.

On the flip side, **dehumidifiers remove excess moisture from the air** and are often used during the summer, in more humid months or in naturally damp places, like basements. Dehumidifiers are beneficial to remove moisture and defend against damp or musty smells, mould, mildew, window condensation, dust mites, and allergens. Dehumidifiers improve your air quality and help protect your home from moisture damage.

By maintaining **healthy humidity levels in your home (between 30 and 50 percent)**, you reduce the strain on your HVAC system, lowering energy consumption. You can purchase a **hygrometer** to monitor your home's humidity level. Low humidity means you need a humidifier, and high humidity means you need a dehumidifier.

## Spooky, Scary Sounds Around Your Home

Is your home trying to speak to you? For a non-exhaustive list of some spooky sounds around your home and what they could mean, read on.

- **Creaking:** rotting wood or a foundation issue, or just natural wood contraction and expansion, or normal settling.
- **Clanging in pipes:** trapped air, loose pipes, or a loose HVAC part.
- **Dripping:** a leak — if you can't see it, it could be a cracked pipe in a wall. Check for water stains.
- **Buzzing:** a loose electrical connection or overloaded circuit, especially if it's coming from wall outlets, the electrical panel, or an appliance.
- **Whistling:** a gap around a window or door, or a leak in your roof.
- **Hissing:** a gas leak, especially if the sound is coming from your gas meter (in which case, exit your home immediately), or an HVAC, plumbing, or electrical issue.

If you hear any of these sounds, the sooner you look into it, the less of a problem it stands to become. When in doubt, always rely on a professional to investigate.

