



## 10 ways to boost your mood during the winter

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Hi Everyone

Seasons have changed; it is grey, cold and wet outside. Vancouver winter can be very difficult for most of us as the lack of sunshine can affect our emotions and moods. The holidays are approaching too and the shopping frenzy has begun, it can be a very difficult period for a lot of people on all levels. Here are some ways I came up with to combat this “complex” time of the year.

### Top 10 ways to boost your mood:

1. **Eat breakfast** – Studies have shown that eating a breakfast (especially fiber) is associated with greater calmness and less stress; it also improves alertness, which helps memory and ability to learn. That’s why they say, “Breakfast is the most important meal of the day”.
2. **Make humor and laughter a part of our daily life** – Never underestimate the power of a silly joke or movie to brighten your day. Laughter reduces muscle tension physically and eases psychological tension that accompanies it the goal of every stress-reducing power. Everyone has heard in the past people say: laughter could sometimes be the best-prescribed medicine.

3. **Listen to uplifting music** – Some music is designed to have a positive effect on emotions and mental clarity. Singing out loud for others or yourself in the shower can be just as good.
  
4. **Use Aromatherapy** – Clinical studies have shown that certain aromatherapy blends ease stress and improve mood. A blend I use (either in a diffuser or a spray bottle) when I feel the blues is:
  - Grapefruit - 1 drop
  - Ylang Ylang – 1 drop
  - Lavender – 1 drop
  
5. **Exercise** – Anyone who has taken a brisk walk knows this, **Movement equals Energy**. Moving makes you feel good because it increases levels of “**happy chemicals**” in the brain, including **dopamine, endorphins** and **serotonin**. Even when short for time, a quick walk, jog or a little dance to your favorite tune may be what you just need to feel your best.
  
6. **Get a massage** – I know you don't need much convincing here, but here are the facts: Massage has been proven to reduce anxiety and sadness, and to lower the stress hormone **cortisol**.
  
7. **Consume enough Vitamin D** – **Serotonin**, our bodies main mood boosting chemical is affected by vitamin D. Studies have shown that consumption of this vitamin makes people feel better (particularly those who suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder)
  
8. **Practice Thai Chi / Qi Gong** – This ancient Chinese exercise has been shown to boost energies, and lessen tension, depression, anger and fatigue.

9. **Don't skimp on good fat** – Hormones that regulate **serotonin, which** in turn regulates mood, are stimulated by fat consumption. Before reaching for that donut reach for salmon. Not all fat has been created equal, and one needs to avoid saturated fat (margarine, deep fried food.) Instead have good fat (nuts, olive oil, fatty fish). The Japanese, whose diet consists of fatty fish, also have the lowest rates of depression in the world.
  
10. **Meditate** – This is more for observing your mood, to be detaching from it and be consumed by it. Even 5-10 minutes spend centering yourself in stillness will have positive effects. In one study group on non-meditating executives was compared to a group that meditated. The results? The mediators experienced less stress, increased energy and alertness and a feeling of improved well-being.