

TIPS AND TRICKS

SAD SEASON | Survival Tips From The Arctic Circle

When the days grow colder and darker, our bodies notice. An alarming 54% of workers report "sunlight blues," while depression cases spike by 11% during the annual transition to standard time. This sudden mood shift, known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD), affects over 10 million Americans.

Yet in Tromsø, Norway, where the sun sets around November 21 and doesn't rise for two months straight, residents not only cope – they enjoy it. Despite these polar nights, Scandinavian nations consistently rank among the world's happiest. Stanford-trained psychologist Kari Leibowitz spent a year in Tromsø studying the mindset driving this phenomenon, detailed in her new book "How To Winter."

Leibowitz and fellow health experts share these tips for not just surviving, but thriving through this difficult season:

Go outside - whether you feel like it or not.

Adopt a smoker's mindset (minus the cigarette) and take at least three five-minute breaks outside daily. Even through clouds, natural light boosts vitamin D and serotonin, essential for immune function, bone health, and mental wellbeing.

Do This: *Schedule morning walks or lunch breaks outdoors when light is strongest. Your body will thank you with improved mood, focus, and sleep patterns.*

Slow down - it's good for you.

Winter naturally decelerates our rhythms. Support this shift by engaging in "slow hobbies" like baking, knitting, or yoga to cultivate feelings of warmth and relaxation. Take hot baths, read more books, meditate, and engage in other mindful activities to help foster peace during darker months and a stressful holiday season.

Do This: *Choose one calming practice to integrate this winter. Treat it as a meditation rather than an obligation.*

Embrace koselig – if you're not doing it already.

While the now-popular Danish hygge celebrates solo coziness, Norwegian koselig takes comfort further. This practice weaves together social connection and outdoor activity, turning winter from a season of isolation into one of shared adventure.

Do This: *Create a winter haven with soft textures and gentle lighting. Instead of solitary hibernation with Netflix, invite friends for twilight walks followed by warm drinks and candlelit conversations.*

For more insights on navigating the darker months, explore some of Leibowitz's work [here](#).

If you're experiencing Seasonal Affective Disorder symptoms, contact a mental health professional. Winter wellness also means asking for the support you need.