

Walk
NEBRASKA**Winter Blues**

Just thinking about winter brings to mind images of snuggling under a blanket with a cup of hot cocoa and not moving until SPRING! This would not be in anyone's best interest to do NOTHING for the cold winter months. Not only will you get bored but you will end up having to rebuild your endurance and strength and the 'winter blues' can and most probably WILL strike!

According to Mark Servis, M.D. Professor of Clinical Psychology at UC Davis, "Many of us experience the "winter blahs" – a depressed mood that lifts when the sun comes out in spring. A small percentage actually have a recognized psychiatric condition called seasonal affective disorder (SAD), characterized by symptoms of depression during the dark, winter months." Only a small percentage (2-5%) of people have SAD but many of us experience the winter 'blahs' or just feeling down and the simple desire to hibernate and stay indoors. Usually people find this feeling lifts in the spring when the days get longer.

In the winter we all tend to spend less time outdoors, the days are shorter, many days might be overcast and gray and in Nebraska in can be COLD—REALLY COLD!! Who wants to go outside even for short periods of time!



To combat the winter blues try to go outside every day when possible. The fresh air and natural light will do wonders for the 'blahs'. Take a short walk at lunch, 10 minutes can make a big difference. On nicer days consider eating your lunch outside, you will come back refreshed and better able to work in the afternoon. Get up earlier in the morning so you can take full advantage of the daylight hours.

There are movements starting up across the nation encouraging everyone to spend time outside daily check out these resources on the internet for ideas of things to do outside in the winter.

- Nebraska Game and Parks Commission, <http://outdoornebraska.ne.gov>
- National Wildlife Federation www.nwf.org
- Let's Move Outside <http://www.letsmove.gov/lets-move-outside>

Of course be safe when you go outside in the winter, dress appropriately, watch out for slippery surfaces and be mindful of traffic especially during times of low visibility or slick roads. Spend time outside this winter and you can still enjoy that cup of hot cocoa and snuggling under that warm blanket!

Resources:

Checkup on Health: Go outside to cure the winter blues:

http://www.ucdmc.ucdavis.edu/welcome/features/20090211_healthtip_winterblues/index.html

This Winter, Get Outside: <http://www.ivs.org/pdf/2010/This%20Winter..Get%20Outside.pdf>

For more information, contact: Nancy Frecks, nfrecks1@unl.edu.

Know how. Know now.



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