



# SUMMER AFTER THE WINTER SLUMP

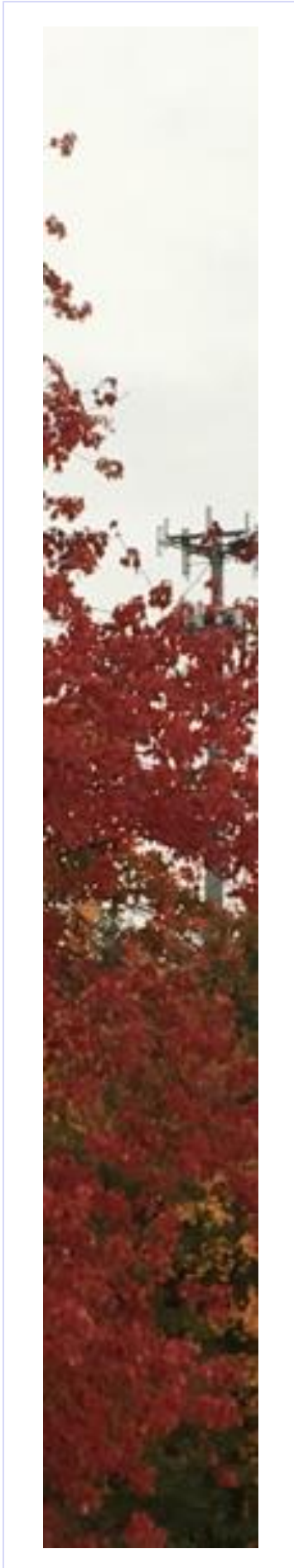
Summer. A time of sunshine, clear skin and day-drinking. Music's a constant in the background, the scent of BBQ permanently in the air, getting reacquainted with the garden you've seen once a week to take the bins in and out before this. The onslaught of hay fever. Boiling, sleepless nights with five fans on full blast while we lay awake roasting in what feels like the fiery pits of Mordor. Yet, you're never without the thought that 'this is the life' - and how can it not be? Your Vitamin D is at optimum levels and your mental health is so right you don't remember it being wrong. For some, however, the season of summer comes with the realisation that winter is around the corner, bringing cold weather, the urge to burrow and seasonal depression. So, in this article, there will be a few tips and tricks to help with the winter slump.

## **No.1 DAYLIGHT BULBS/SAD BULBS**

For those with SAD (seasonal affective disorder), using something like SAD or daylight bulbs that imitate natural light can be a great help! Start by using these bulbs in rooms you frequent the most, such as your bedroom, living room and anywhere else you see fit and little by little you will begin to see a boost in productivity, you might even start to enjoy studying. Your moods will begin to improve as the lights help to produce more serotonin and a little extra of the sunshine vitamin, great for when the sun is M.I.A. Even your vision and how you see colours will improve. The light from the bulbs can also encourage your brain to produce melatonin, making you sleepy and ultimately improving sleep, which can help with insomnia and help you say hello to eight hours sleep. These bulbs help with all things SAD.

## **No.2 VITAMIN SUPPLEMENTS**

Vitamins, vitamins, vitamins! You need these whether you suffer from SAD or not. Make sure you're up to date with them as having low iron levels, for example, can make your bout with SAD that much worse. It can lead to fainting, lethargy, and endlessly tired days and nights. So, go forth and use that student discount at Superdrug, Boots, or Wilkos and get those vitamins even if they're Flintstone gummies.



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## **No.3 GYM**

I know, I know - the dreaded gym. As daunting as it sounds, the gym is a great way for you to get out, get some exercise and a change of scenery. You don't have to stay for 2 hours grunting and screaming till you're a sweaty mess (unless you want to, of course) - you might find you enjoy yoga, a HIIT (high-intensity interval) class, or simply just walking on the treadmill. Don't feel too pressured though, a simple ten-minute walk to the shop or getting off two bus stops earlier could be a big help.

## **NO.4 ANIMALS**

If you qualify and you can, get yourself a service animal. Animals are great companions and can be trained, to sense when your moods are unstable and help with balancing them back out. They also give you some sense of routine and permanent responsibility, meaning you'll have to take care of yourself to take care of them. You don't have to take on a big financial commitment like a cat, dog or a miniature horse - it could be something small, like a hamster or a guinea pig. And I already know what you're thinking: "yeah right, not my uni accommodation", but, by law, landlords are required to accept qualified service animals, so make the law work for you. Just remember, adopt, don't shop.

## **NO.5 TALK TO SOMEONE**

Having a good set of friends to talk to could make a world of difference; they're familiar and know our likes and dislikes, are mostly readily available and typically want us to be at our best. While talking with friends is a great option, I would also advise booking in with your Uni counsellors at the start of term, especially as during the middle of a bout with SAD, we have no energy to expel anywhere else but, on our will, to live. Counsellors can help with professional advice, planning your days, talking through your worries, just providing a listening ear, or, if need be, giving advice on medication and seeking further help.

Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

Website: [www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)