

## Dr. Fuhrman's Favorite Therapeutic Light

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Humankind evolved under the outdoor day–night cycle, which is essential to maintaining a normal, healthy physiology. When there is less sunlight, many people suffer from "winter depression," or what is commonly known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD). Typically, symptoms of depression increase in the winter and subside in the spring. Light therapy can help us feel energized and alert, and can also act to reset the body's internal clock; naturally restoring our day–night cycle and counteracting the symptoms of light deprivation in the winter months.

Scientists think that light therapy works at several different levels, producing a combined beneficial effect. When used at an appropriate morning hour (or in rare cases, evening hour), it corrects the misalignment of the internal body clock. It stimulates the brain's production of neurochemicals that are thought to be antidepressant (and in that sense, it mimics drug effects in a more natural way, without the need for drugs).

This Therapeutic Light contains the features that medical literature demonstrates are critical to the effectiveness of light therapy for **Major Depressive Disorder, Dysthymia, Bipolar Depression, Seasonal Depressive Disorder, PMS, Insomnia, ADHD, ADD, and Bulimia Nervosa**. Studies show that light therapy may also be helpful in **Fibromyalgia** and **Postpartum Depression** as well. It is recommended by the non-profit Center for Environmental Therapeutics (CET), and used exclusively in a new light therapy clinical program at Columbia University's Presbyterian Hospital.

In 2005, a meta-analysis of all randomized, controlled trials of light therapy found dawn stimulation with a bright light to be as effective for major depression as medications. The results occurred more rapidly than drugs, with results noted in as little as one week.<sup>1</sup> Expert professional consensus recommends using diffuse white light that blocks out ultraviolet radiation (in contrast to the "sun lamps" used for tanning, which are dangerous both to skin and eyes).

Treatment regimens should be with a doctor's supervision in cases of full-blown clinical depression. Light therapy involves daily, scheduled exposure to intense levels of artificial light in order to regulate seasonal mood swings, improve sleeping patterns, and produce a sense of well-being.

**See *Dr. Fuhrman's Healthy Times Newsletter*, Issue #24, March 2006 for more information.**

1. Golden RN et al. The Efficacy of Light Therapy in the Treatment of Mood Disorders: A Review and Meta-Analysis of the Evidence. *Am J Psychiatry* 2005; 162:656–662

According to medical researchers, the fluorescent light box is the preferred device for light therapy, with a recommended starting dose of 10,000 lux for 30 minutes per day. (Lux is the unit of measuring the illumination intensity of light.) The required parameters for 10,000 lux light therapy have been thoroughly clinically tested at major university centers, and have been established as the international standard for treatment of winter depression, milder “winter doldrums,” and other chronobiological, circadian rhythm sleep and mood disturbances.

### **Suggested Use:**

For best results, use this light early in the morning, as close to dawn as possible. Light therapy is most effective when done between 6:00 and 7:00am. Sessions should begin within 10 minutes of wake-up time, and those using it for depression should wake up relatively early.

During the winter months, light therapy should begin before sunrise and people who are depressed may need to be woken up and have their bedtimes adjusted to synchronize with the early morning waking. Their circadian rhythm may need to be adjusted and, in many cases, sleep duration may have to be shortened. Oversleeping is discouraged. Sedating medications that lead to late morning waking are counter-productive to the effective potential of light therapy.

Once remission is obtained light therapy should be continued until the climate and time of year enables replacement with natural light outdoors from the sun.

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**This therapeutic light unit delivers all of the benefits of light therapy with a sleek design.**



### **Bright Light Therapy Standards:**

- Design based on university clinical trials
- 10,000 LUX outdoor level at a comfortable distance
- Compact, discreet design
- Emits balanced white light for eye safety
- Broad field of illumination for easy use
- 99.3% UV filtered protection
- Glare-free diffuser for visual comfort
- Adjustable height for optimal positioning
- Projects light from above for best effort
- Solid, platform base that does not allow the light to be easily tipped over