



22 February 2011

## **Natural Ways to Beat Depression**

### **Outsmart wicked weather patterns with these mood-boosting tips as you await the arrival of sunnier days.**

By Loren Chidoni

April showers bring plenty of glowers. But why? Early spring's oscillating temps and lack of sunlight can cause a serious drop in your level of serotonin, a feel-good chemical that's found in the brain. And without enough serotonin, our mood descends into darkness or, at the very least, an unpleasant crabbiness (you know, the bad temper we typically blame on the rain). Fortunately, you can outsmart wicked weather patterns with these mood-boosting tips as you await the arrival of sunnier days.

#### **Light Up Your Life**

If a Miami mini-break isn't an option, seek out a light box. A strong one that emits at least 10,000 lux can have the same effect as basking in the early-morning sun--minus the cancer-causing UV rays. Place the light box on a table near you--you need only 30 minutes of exposure to increase your serotonin levels and leave you "more alert and energized, two factors that contribute to a good mood," says Michael Terman, Ph.D., director of the Center for Light Treatment and Biological Rhythms at New York City's Columbia University Medical Center. For more info--such as where to buy a light box--visit [cet.org](http://cet.org).