



The FACE WEIGHT LOSS Program NEWSLETTER Number 12
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Positive Coping for the Darker Days of Fall and Winter

It is getting dark earlier these days, and with the switch away from daylight savings time, the goblins of our minds are coming out more and more. **With darkness descending when it seems as if it's still afternoon, the lure of the leftover butterfingers from Halloween often trip us up.**

It is well known that many people react to the diminishing daylight with feelings of depression and low energy, and with a lack of enthusiasm and interest in taking care of themselves. **It has actually been identified that an increase in cravings for sugar and carbohydrates accompanies these seasonal mood changes, as well as a decrease in activity level.** The sense of the world closing in seems to come abruptly as daylight shortens in the fall, and our coping mechanisms for making it through the darker winter months are rusty.

What can we do? How can we comfort ourselves and lift our mood and energy as the darkness descends without turning to food?

In the summer we find easier answers when outdoor activities such as walking with a friend around the park or playing on a company softball team are all beckoning to us. At this time of year we have to move the party indoors (or at least a well-lit playing field if it's still warm out.) In our tele-groups in which we help people learn to stop emotional eating, **we ask participants to make a list of activities that provide comfort in dark times besides eating.** For some people their image involves talking with a good friend, while sharing a cozy fire. For others, playing monopoly or scrabble is their cup of tea. And for others, participating in community affairs offers a respite from aloneness and the urge to fill the space with food.

Think about what you enjoy and have been enjoying in the summer months, and how you can adapt these activities to evenings that are long and dark. Pick one activity off your list and make a plan to make it happen today. Many people find that once they are home and it is dark, it is difficult to take action or go out again. It's a good idea to make these plans while it's still light out.

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