

How Light Can Help You Sleep



As we head into fall and the shorter days and longer nights the sunshine we enjoyed in the summer is not as plentiful. By the time winter comes we will be heading to work in the dark and returning home as the sun is setting.

For many people, this lack of sunshine brings on insomnia and even the onset of Seasonal Affective Disorder or SAD. If you've tried everything, your bed is comfortable, you've made your bedroom into a place of rest and you have no health issues that may be affecting your sleep, then a light therapy box may be a natural way to cure your insomnia and may even help with the symptoms of SAD.

Light stops your body from making melatonin which is a hormone that makes you want to sleep. That's why it's important

to make sure you sleep in a dark room without the TV's light or a lamp or night light left on.

If you find yourself unable to sleep night after night you may need to re-set your natural circadian rhythm.

To receive maximum benefit you should use light therapy at the same time every

morning. Most light boxes require from 15 to 30 minutes of use a day. You can read a book, eat breakfast, check email while the light box does its work.

The Mayo Clinic has a number of recommendations when it comes to choosing a light therapy box.

First and foremost is to visit your doctor's office to ensure that light therapy will aid your symptoms.

If you want the light box to treat symptoms of SAD then ensure that the brand specifically ensures that. Some light boxes are



made to treat skin conditions and will not lessen symptoms of SAD and/or depression.

A bright sunny day will give you a measurement of about 10,000 lux which is a unit of light measurement that takes area into consideration. Good quality light boxes will emit 10,000 lux at a certain distance. So 10,000 lux at 12 inches means that you have to sit 12 inches from the light box in order to receive the most beneficial light.

Just as you wouldn't stare directly at the sun, you should

never look directly at the light box.

Make sure the light box does not emit ultraviolet (UV) light, most newer models will specify that they are UV free.

Traditional light boxes used fluorescent or incandescent light. LED light is more

energy efficient.

Most light boxes typically use white light. There are light boxes now that emit blue light which manufacturers say mimics the sun's light better than white light. Currently, according to the Mayo Clinic, there is much more research advocating white light

rather than blue light in the treatment of insomnia and SAD.

For most people light therapy takes about two weeks to take effect however some respond within days while others may take a month to start feeling better.

Most reputable companies will offer a money back guarantee on light boxes, from about 30 to 60 days, which means that you can use the light and if it doesn't work for you, it can easily be returned.

Drop by any location of Sleep Experience and we'll be happy to share many more tips on how you can get the most from your sleep.

Jim Conlon

Sleep Experience
BETTER SLEEP BEGINS WITH YOUR MATTRESS
BRANDSOURCE
www.sleepexperiencesudbury.ca

1965 Lasalle Blvd. 705-524-7533
Cedar Point Plaza 705-523-0595