

Beat the autumn blues (a worksheet)

Activity 1

Look at the picture. What season is it? Why do people feel blue during this season? Work with your partner and make a list of 5- 10 tips how to beat the autumn blues.



Activity 2

Read the text. How many of your tips were mentioned in it?



Mood boosters: ways to beat the autumn blues

As the nights draw in we all hit a post-summer slump(1), but these mood boosters should help you sail through the season (2) with a smile

1. Be a morning person

Lack of sunlight as the days become shorter and darker can trigger seasonal affective disorder (3) (SAD), leaving you feeling depressed and tired. According to neuroscientist Professor Russell Foster, a key way to ward off this condition(4) is to get outside for 30 minutes between 6am and 10am when daylight is strongest.

“Even on an overcast day, light is 500 to 1000 times brighter outside than in your office or home,” he explains. “Research shows exposure to early morning light helps reset our internal body clock and fight SAD.”

2. Sort out your sleep pattern

Waking up exhausted and craving more sleep(5) is common in autumn. Longer hours of darkness cause increased levels of melatonin – the sleep hormone – making you feel sleepy in the day, but restless at night.

We often make the problem worse by overriding our natural sleep/wake systems by drinking coffee to stay alert, and using alcohol to sedate us at night.

Instead, stick to a routine(6) of going to bed and getting up at the same time.

3. Know your stuff and get seasonal food savvy

Shorter days and lack of sunshine reduces our body's production of serotonin, the 'happy hormone'. This makes us crave serotonin-boosting carbs such as pasta, potatoes and rice, which can quickly pile on the pounds. Resist the urge(7) and tuck into these low-fat seasonal treats, which are rich in disease-fighting antioxidants:

Swede, sweet potato and pumpkins – these bright orange veg are all great sources of vitamin C, fibre and the antioxidant, beta carotene.

Apples and pears – apples contain heart-healthy flavonoids – some of the most potent antioxidants around – while pears are rich in soluble fibre, which helps boost digestion and lowers cholesterol. Figs – a high-fibre treat, figs are also a good source of calcium.

4. Set up a goal

With summer over and Christmas still so far away, it can be hard to feel motivated during autumn. To combat this, psychologist Avy Joseph recommends starting by achieving something small such as finally reading that book you've fancied for ages (even if it's Fifty Shades of Grey!). After that it's time to set a bigger goal, such as getting into yoga or learning a new language.

6. Try laughter therapy

Laughter is crucial to boosting your endorphins – those all-important, feel-good brain chemicals. Record your favourite sitcoms to watch on a regular basis, book tickets for stand-up or invite friends for comedy-themed DVD evenings.

7. Work it out

Colder weather and darker nights can stop you even venturing out.

“Many people end up ditching the gym (8) once summer's over,” says celebrity trainer Elia Siaperas (www.labspa.co.uk), “but that's exactly the time you need to dig deep and find some extra motivation, as research shows exercise can boost your mood (9).”

8. Give meditation a go

A recent US study found meditation was as good as antidepressants in preventing depression flare-ups (10). A simple method is to light a candle and gaze at the flickering flame for 10 minutes, allowing your mind to just drift and empty itself of any thoughts.

9. Book a break

Many of us experience what psychologists at the University of Granada in Spain have dubbed 'post-holiday syndrome' – feeling tired, fed-up and demotivated after our summer break. But it's not just the trip itself that puts a smile on your face (11), it turns out the planning is just as important, with psychologists proving that just looking forward to your holiday is enough to lift your mood.

So start researching next year's trip or booking that weekend away – now!

10. Let nature do the work

Enjoying the great outdoors can boost your mood and self-esteem, according to one study by the University of Essex. The researchers found that a walk surrounded by nature lifted spirits, while a walk in a city increased depression. So get out and make the most of the gorgeous autumn colours by visiting your local park or forest.

11. Exercise first thing

Getting up just 30 minutes earlier each morning makes it easier to fit exercise into a busy schedule (12). An early workout can also boost your energy levels for the rest of the day and give you an endorphin high for up to seven hours after exercising.

Adapted from

<https://www.mirror.co.uk/lifestyle/health/20-ways-to-beat-the-autumn-blues-1371446>

Activity 3

Read the text again. Mark the sentences true or false.

1. Sleep longer hours, wake up preferably after 10 a.m.
2. Stick to a high-fat products which are rich in disease-fighting antioxidants.
3. Taking up a new activity will give you a sense of achievement.
4. Don't give up gym trainings to keep your spirits up.
5. Planning your holiday can boost your mood even more than a trip itself.
6. It's not so difficult to squeeze morning exercise into your daily routine.



Activity 4

Match the highlighted words from the text with their definitions.

1. a situation in which something negative such as violence, pain, depression or anger suddenly starts or gets much worse.
2. lift your spirits.
3. have a very strong feeling of wanting to sleep.
4. start being in a bad condition or unmotivated after your vacation or feeling sad because summer is over.
5. make you happy.
6. cause autumn depression to start.
7. continue doing your everyday actions without changing.
8. finally be in a situation when you stop going to the gym.
9. prevent something unpleasant from harming or coming close to you.
10. succeed very easily in surviving autumn.
11. stop yourself from doing something that you want to do so much.
12. do physical activities on a daily basis.

Roleplay

Student A. Think of a thing that you want to improve in your life, for example, lose weight, feel less stressed, sleep better etc.

Student B. You are a psychologist. Give a piece of advice using the phrases.

Useful vocabulary

hit a post-summer slump
sail through the season with a smile
trigger seasonal affective disorder
ward off this condition
crave more sleep
stick to a routine
resist the urge
end up ditching the gym
boost your mood
depression flare-ups
puts a smile on your face
fit exercise into a busy schedule

Activity 5

Talk to your partner. Which advice from the text you:



- a) are prepared to take
- b) already follow
- c) want to ignore.

Explain why some of the tips work and why others are ineffective. Use the highlighted phrases in your speech.