



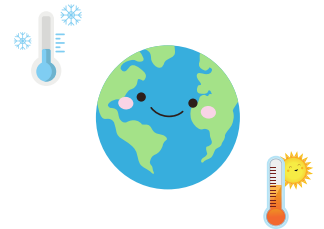
ELITE  
PERSONAL TRAINING & FITNESS SOLUTIONS

# HEALTH TOPIC OF THE WEEK

## 1/2 - Winter is Coming... Be Prepared

### Be Prepared for the Winter Blues

January can be both exciting and daunting. Holiday festivities and travel are ending (Phew!) and a new year is just beginning (Yikes!). Like other years, 2024 will be filled with goals and challenges. Whether they be mental or physical, EPT can help. Your mental and physical well-being are inextricably linked, so your trainers always consider the full picture. This week let's look at two acronyms for SAD: Seasonal Affective Disorder and Standard American Diet. The first impacts mental health; the second impacts physical health.

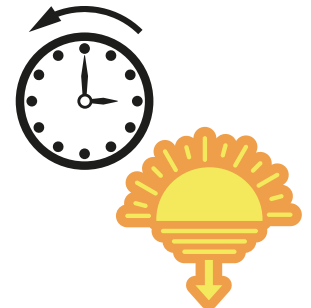


### Don't be SAD

The winter blues can be a real struggle. Many people go through periods of feeling sad or down, not like their usual selves. SAD affects about 3 to 6 million Americans. It's four times more common among women than men and increases in frequency and severity the further away you get from the equator. Seasonal Affective Disorder may be the case if there are significant changes in mood and behavior when the seasons change. This is typically a recurring pattern, with symptoms persisting for four months. Mood changes impact feelings, thinking and behaviors.

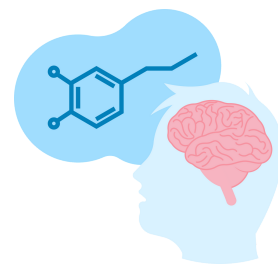


Note that winter-pattern SAD should not be confused with "holiday blues" - feelings of sadness or anxiety brought on by stress at certain times of the year. The depression associated with SAD is related to changes in daylight hours, not the calendar, so stresses associated with the holidays or predictable seasonal changes in work or school schedules, family visits, and so forth are not the same thing as SAD.



Elite Personal Training and Fitness Solutions does not provide medical treatment or intervention. We acknowledge scientific evidence that appropriately intensive exercise and sustainable nutritional intervention can have significant impact on chronic health disorders and obesity, dramatically improving symptoms when recommendations are followed. Please visit us at [Eliteptf.com](http://Eliteptf.com) for more information and to schedule your evaluation.

Luckily, like other forms of depression, SAD is treatable. One of the recommended treatments is exercise. Exercise releases endorphins, which are hormones that reduce pain and increase feelings of well-being. In addition, exercise increases your metabolism, which helps improve your energy levels. Fatigue from well-used muscles is a far better type of fatigue than that of depression. Other benefits include increased self-esteem, improved sleep and reduced anxiety.



Multiple studies have demonstrated that engagement in physical activities can help alleviate SAD symptoms and improve mood and energy, especially when an exercise intervention is paired with bright light therapy. If you read our December 11th health topic on depression and anxiety, you will have a better idea of how depression can impact your gut health and vice versa. ([12/11 - Depression and anxiety \(Clients\) \(eliteptf.com\)](#)).



### The Standard American Diet is SAD!

Another SAD that negatively impacts gut health is the Standard American Diet. The typical American diet involves heavy consumption of processed foods. This diet is high in caloric value but low in nutrient value.

EPT warns against the regular consumption of food that is high in sugar, fat and additives. If you are a long-time reader, this advice is not new. So, why is it so hard to follow? One of the biggest hurdles to healthy eating is time and convenience. The food industry knows and preys on this. How can you foster good nutrition habits? Preparation and planning are key!



### Prepare

Convenience is defined as being able to proceed with little effort or difficulty. Healthy eating, from a societal perspective, has a perception of being difficult and convoluted. It's not. The key is sustainability. A few ways to prepare for better eating:

- **Plan your week.**

- Think about your meal plans for the week.
- How can you make food ahead?
- What meals do you typically struggle with?



- **Plan your food shopping.**

- Use a list. We can give you one!
- Map out the perimeter.
- Think about what you will make and how/where you will store your groceries.



Tip of the week (1/2), page 2



- **Plan a back-up option.**

- When things get chaotic, have an easy meal solution in your back pocket.
- A protein or meal replacement shake like Ka'chava is an excellent choice.  
(See our May 9, 2022 health topic here: [5/9 - Kachava \(Clients\) \(eliteptf.com\)](https://www.eliteptf.com/5/9-Kachava-Clients))



- **Prepare large quantities and freeze for easy meals in the future.**

- Great recipes for freezing include chilis, soups, stews, and protein grain/rice bowls.
- Almost any of your favorite healthy dishes can be frozen. Ask us for tips.



- **Prepare and portion meal components.**

- Portion and freeze large batches of flavorful proteins, veggies or sides.
- If you have a large freezer, try spreading out individual items like fruits or proteins on a large sheet tray and freeze. Once frozen, you can consolidate them into freezer bags or containers.

- **Prepare your freezer.**

- Label, date and organize the contents.
- If your freezer is a mess, you will lose items and be less likely to use anything.
- Frozen fruits and vegetables can be used in smoothies and stir fries.



If you are genuinely too busy to manage cooking ahead and freezing, we hear you. Plan for healthy options at local restaurants. Avoid chains and large-scale fast-food sites.

## Conclusion

Much like waking up and eating a good breakfast to start your day, let's make January a positive steppingstone for a healthier year. Gradually implementing positive health habits will help in so many ways.

Good nutrition and exercise provide a plethora of mental and physical benefits. Most people won't have success making behavior changes on their own. Let EPT help get you there.

Ask us about individualized exercise and nutrition counseling to help you live longer and better.



Tip of the week (1/2), page 3



## References

[Seasonal Affective Disorder - National Institute of Mental Health \(NIMH\) \(nih.gov\)](#)  
[convenience meaning - Google Search](#)  
[Fun January Facts & Trivia - Original Works](#)

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SCAN ME



Tip of the week (1/2), page 4

