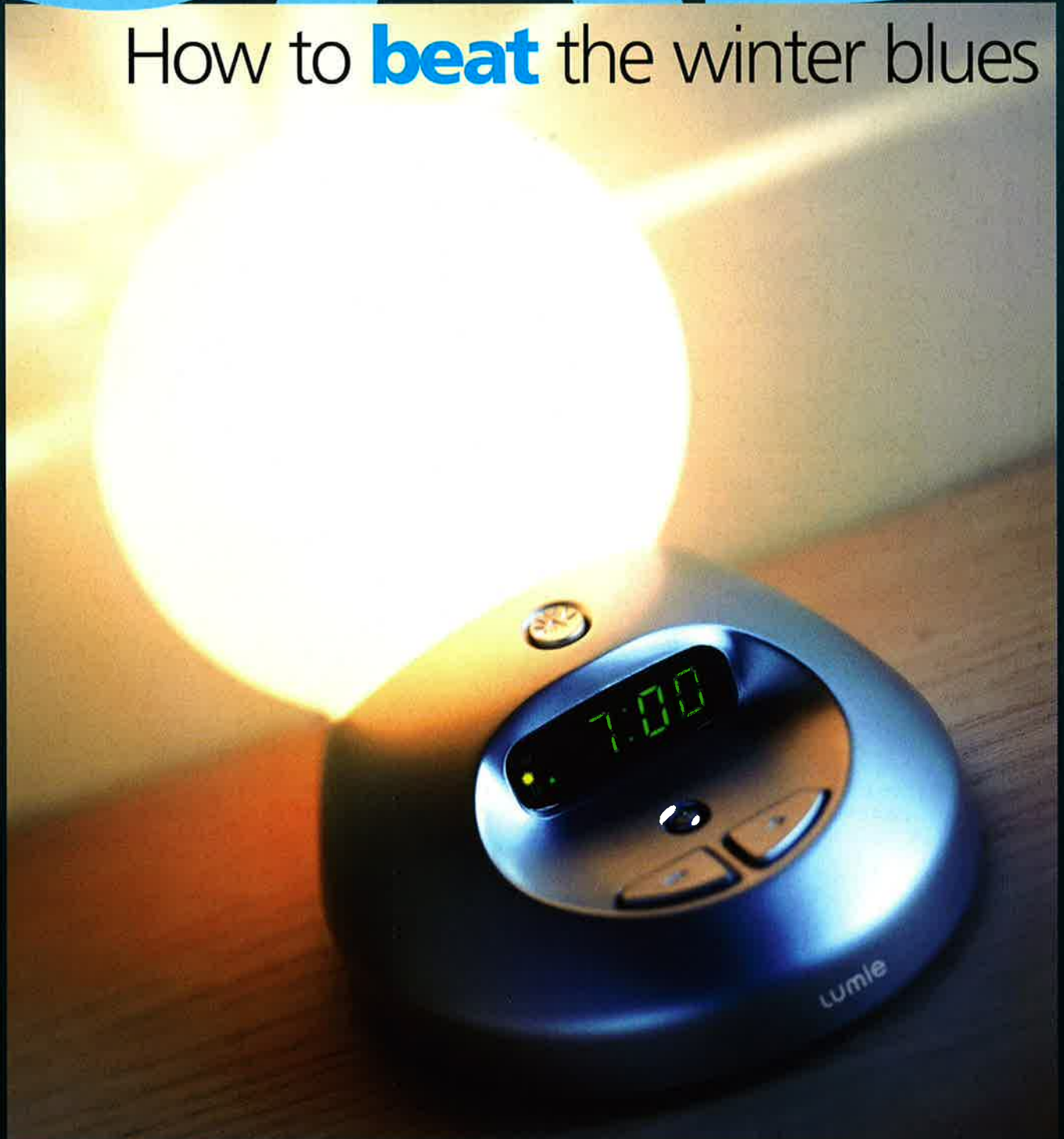




Don't be **SAD**

How to **beat** the winter blues





The clocks have changed and suddenly the days are shorter and darker. Many people begin to feel less energetic at this time of year and for some getting out of bed – let alone training – can be an effort.

If this sounds like you, you may be one of the 15% of the UK adult population suffering from SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder) or the milder 'winter blues'. Both conditions can play havoc with your work and social life leaving you feeling downright miserable. Symptoms include:

- feeling lethargic
- lower sex drive
- food cravings
- weight gain
- oversleeping but not refreshed when you wake up

Some SAD sufferers endure symptoms for years before being diagnosed. They find they are only able to operate at a fraction of their ability; work and relationships suffer, adding to the overall feeling of despair and many are prescribed anti-depressants.

What causes SAD?

SAD is caused by the lack of bright light in winter. Researchers have shown that when bright light enters our eyes, it causes chemical reactions to occur that affect our daily rhythms and moods. Melatonin is produced as it gets dark, making us feel sleepy; at dawn, as the light increases, melatonin production falls and we start to wake up. We find it difficult to wake up on dark mornings because our melatonin levels are still high.

Because SAD is caused by lack of light then the best way to prevent or alleviate it is to increase your exposure to light. The most effective treatment is to get away during the winter months to somewhere sunny – the beach or mountains. The next best thing is to use light therapy; after all if the problem is caused by lack of light from nature then it makes sense to get light by other means.

What is light therapy?

There are two main types of light therapy – Lightboxes (or bright lights) and Bodyclocks.

Lightboxes emit far greater light than a normal light bulb. The brighter the light, the less time it takes to use. The maximum recommended level of light is 10,000 lux – about the same as a spring morning on a clear day and about 20 times brighter than a well-lit office.

Bodyclocks work by simulating dawn, allowing you to wake gradually and naturally. By using your body's natural response to sunrise and sunset, the Bodyclock helps to synchronise your circadian rhythm (sleep/wake pattern). Bodyclocks have been shown in clinical trials to improve mood, energy, productivity and quality of sleep and awakening. The built-in light gently brightens over half an hour so that when you wake up you're ready to face the morning miles.

Emma Hankins, a fitness instructor from Hampshire, is a Bodyclock fan. "It helps me wake up more gradually and naturally," she says. "It's also really useful at the end of the day after I've been teaching classes for hours at a time. It's often really hard to unwind and get to sleep but if I use the sunset feature it just helps me to chill out."

Olympic success

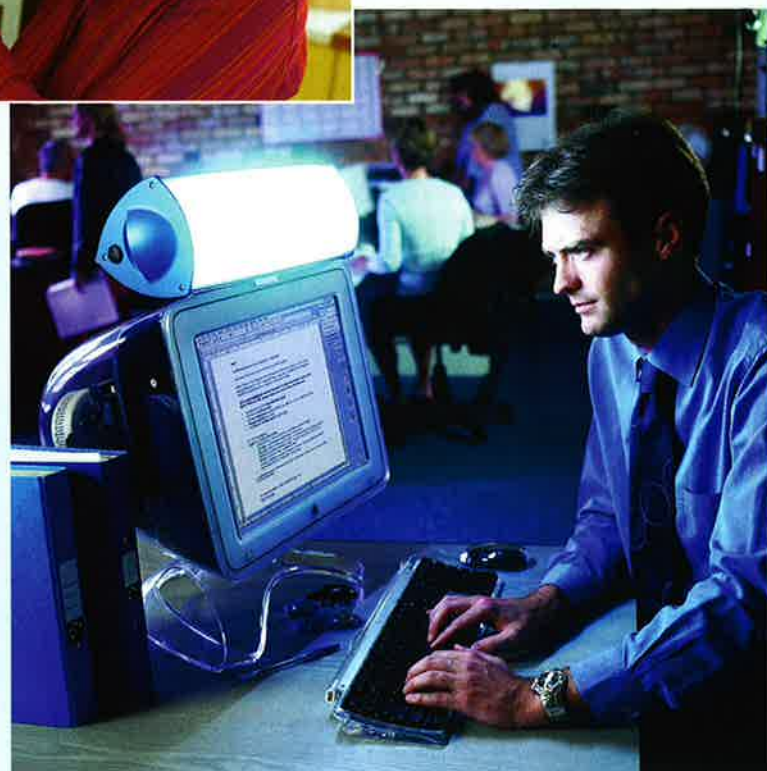
The benefits of using a Bodyclock to help with training patterns were shown to great effect last year. Cambridgeshire company 'Outside In' supplied the 2004 British Olympic gold medal-winning rowing team with Bodyclocks to use during training.

Team member Ed Coode said: "The Lumie Bodyclocks were brilliant, we loved the sunset feature, which let us drift off to sleep, and were then woken very effectively by the sunrise in the morning; they definitely made a difference. They actually worked a lot better than I ever thought they would."

Asked if they made a difference to going to sleep and getting up on the early training mornings, Ed replied: "All the boys loved the Lumie Bodyclocks. As the race got nearer we were having to get up earlier and, as it didn't get light in Athens until 6.30am, it was brilliant to be woken by sunlight at 4.45am! The clocks woke us up on the day of the final."

Outside In has been making light therapy products for about 14 years. The company developed the Lumie range to offer stylish and innovative products designed to suit busy lifestyles. These include Brightspark, which

can be clipped to the top of a computer and the Lumie Deskamp, which looks like a normal desk lamp so sufferers can use it at work and get their light therapy discreetly. The company offers a home trial system that allows you to try light therapy without taking a big financial risk. Many products are also VAT free.



BODYCLOCK COMPETITION

We have a Lumie Bodyclock Sunray to give away. To enter the competition, please answer the question below and send your answer on a postcard, stating your name, address, reference and daytime phone number to :

Bodyclock Giveaway

Ultra-FIT, Champions House, 5 Princes Street, Penzance, Cornwall TR18 2NL

Question:

What does SAD stand for?

Answers to reach us by 5th January 2006

For information about bodyclocks and light therapy, please visit www.lumie.com or call the Lumie Careline on 0845 658 9292