

Removing SAD from Winter

This light box is funded by the MindHandHeart Innovation Fund. Light therapy is a way to treat seasonal affective disorder (SAD) and certain other conditions by exposure to artificial light. For more information about this project go to:

<https://arii.github.io/SAD/>

During light therapy, you sit or work near this light therapy box. The box gives off bright light (10,000 lux of UV filtered light) that mimics natural outdoor light.

Safety Message (mayoclinic.org)

Light therapy is generally safe. If side effects occur, they're usually mild and short lasting. They may include:

- Eyestrain, headache, nausea, irritability, or agitation
- Mania, euphoria, hyperactivity or agitation associated with bipolar disorder

When side effects do occur, they may go away on their own within a few days of starting light therapy. You also may be able to manage side effects by reducing treatment time, moving farther from your light box, taking breaks during long sessions, or changing the time of day you use light therapy. Talk to your doctor for advice if side effects are a problem.

It's best to be under the care of a health professional while using light box therapy.

It's always a good idea to talk to a doctor before starting light therapy, but it's especially important if:

- You have a condition that makes your skin especially sensitive to light, such as systemic lupus erythematosus
- You take medications that increase your sensitivity to sunlight, such as certain antibiotics, anti-inflammatories or the herbal supplement St. John's Wort
- You have an eye condition that makes your eyes vulnerable to light damage

Light therapy may trigger mania in some people with bipolar disorder, so get advice from your doctor before starting light therapy. If you have any concerns about how light therapy may be affecting your mood or thoughts, seek help right away.

Support or Contact

- If you have any questions or comments about this project, feel free to contact Ariel Anders at aanders@mit.edu
- These lightboxes have prior approval from MIT Environment, Health & Safety (EHS) to place on campus. If you have any environmental or safety concerns, please contact their department.