

NEW LOOK

Strictly Explodes



- * The one they want out
- * The jealous girlfriend
- * The unlikely liaison

GREAT VALUE
EXTRA PAGES

My husband's dark secret



How could he kill then come home to me?

National Treasure

Julie Walters

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I WEAR
SPANX!'**

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92P

When the clocks went back, Lorna Robson sank into gloom until spring arrived. But this year she's not scared of winter...

My husband notices if I've missed a day of my SAD therapy

Winter's always been a very depressing time for me. When the alarm went off I'd snuggle under the duvet, dreading the day ahead – quite different from summer, when I'd wake full of energy. I felt sluggish and had to push myself through each day. I'm a primary school teacher and, while the children lifted my spirits a bit, below the surface I was utterly miserable.

I'm an outdoor person. I love gardening, and at the first sign of sunshine I'm out in that school playground because it makes me feel so much better.

I'd like to be one of those people who love to come home in the dark, draw the curtains and snuggle by the fire toasting crumpets, but I'm just not. And while others seem to look forward to winter, I never did. The prospect of its approach filled me with dread.

I accepted that every October I'd start feeling grim, and by January almost suicidal, until March when the clocks leapt forward and I'd be up and running again.

Looking back, I'm surprised

my husband didn't walk out. I was so grumpy and bad-tempered and barely saw my friends. I didn't feel sociable and everything felt negative.

A friend suggested that I think about my plants waiting to spring up in the garden, that they would give me hope. I did feel a little better once the snowdrops opened, but while the garden was bleak, so was I.

Last October, as soon as the clocks changed, I realised I couldn't face another year, another wasted six months. I was clearly suffering from a form of SAD, or Seasonal Affective Disorder – the 'winter blues'. When a friend suggested light therapy, I thought it sounded a bit crazy but at the same time I felt that I had nothing to lose. My brother-in-law is a fan of light therapy too, so I looked at what he used, then ordered a Lumie light box online.

The glowing, clear light was much brighter than I had imagined – a neighbour asked if aliens had landed! I laughed – a sign of how much better I was feeling. I wouldn't have laughed the year before! Within three days of sitting for an hour with the light



Lorna Robson, 57, Cheltenham

next to my computer, my mood had already lifted.

I use it in the early evening while I'm catching up with emails. Another friend keeps hers in the kitchen and switches it on while she's getting tea ready.

Light therapy has made a major change to my winter outlook. I feel positive and can plan things and keep a perspective on life. My husband and colleagues can tell if I haven't used it for a day. I think it's also helped my immunity. I used to get dreadful sinusitis in winter, but last year I only had a twinge. Meanwhile, now that the clocks have changed, I'm able to smile about it!

WHAT IS SAD? (Seasonal Affective Disorder)

The causes

Lack of sunlight in the eyes – pure and simple. Sunlight affects some of the brain's chemicals and hormones, affecting mood, appetite and sleep. Diagnosis can be made after three or more consecutive winters of SAD symptoms.

What are the symptoms?

These can include feelings of depression; sleep problems, lethargy, over-eating, poor concentration, irritability, anxiety and loss of sex drive, followed by a sudden mood lift once spring arrives.

What will help?

Light therapy can help up to 85% of cases. Getting out in any sunshine is also beneficial. Doctors may suggest antidepressants.

Two ways to get some light relief...

* LIGHT THERAPY

Lumie light boxes start from £99.95 for Lumie Arabica at lumie.com. There's a 30-day home trial period.



* TAKE: Karma St John's Wort Extract, £15.31 for 30 one-a-day tablets. St John's Wort is sometimes called the 'sunshine herb' and can help relieve a low mood.



IS THE DOCTOR IN?

Dr Ellie Cannon answers your health questions



Where's my sex drive?

Q I am 44 and have the Mirena contraceptive coil. I've had it for five months and I'm happy with it, except that I have no sex drive now! I'm happily married and I love my husband, so could the Mirena be causing this drop?

A The Mirena is a very effective contraceptive. It works like an old-fashioned coil sitting in the womb but it also releases a small amount of the female hormone progesterone. This is most likely what's sapping your sex drive. It doesn't happen to most women with the Mirena, but it is a known side-effect. Progesterone can also cause bloating, constipation and headaches. Changing to a hormone-free coil should help.

I need weight-loss surgery

Q I am 5ft 3in and weigh 16st. I have tried years of dieting and exercise, and am now so depressed, as my weight makes life very hard. I have read about celebrities' gastric bypasses. Could I have one on the NHS? I'm desperate.

A Your weight is 'morbidly obese', as you have a body mass index over 40. This is very serious for you and your physical health. You would certainly be entitled to weight-loss surgery on the NHS – a gastric band or a bypass. Speak to your GP, who should refer you to the obesity team in your local hospital. There may be a waiting list, and patients will usually need counselling and health checks first.

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