

I can see the light!

For us northern **dwellers**, our relationship with sunlight is particularly strong. After months of **glum** darkness, we are now experiencing occasional days of intense, **break-out-the-sunglasses light**. Yippie!

Snow is still on the ground, but that winning feeling has set in. Another winter has been defeated, and we slowly begin to look forward to seeing leaves on the trees.

Studies show that people in northern countries experience the winter blues at a higher rate than individuals **populating more temperate climates**.

In Finland, it is estimated that about 25 percent of Finns **feel a little down in the mouth** during the winter. Only about 10 percent of Americans, by contrast, feel the same in the winter.

Surprisingly, an equal amount of Americans and Finns (about one percent of the population) suffer from "**seasonal affective disorder**". SAD is a much more severe form of the winter blues. Downright depression can set in, which is **alleviated** chiefly through medication and light therapy.

But help is on the way – **savvy** employers in northern climates nowadays provide employees with big windows and special lamps to **boost** energy and productivity levels – which definitely helps us to get by until Mother Nature **kicks in** with the natural stuff that lights up the sky.

Now if only someone could do something to make my bedroom darker in the summer. How is a person to sleep at night with all that endless Nordic sunlight?

Glossary

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| alleviate | to make something bad less severe (e.g. pain, problems) |
| boost | to improve or increase something |
| break-out-the-sunglasses light | extremely bright sunlight |
| dweller | inhabitant |
| feel a little down in the mouth | to feel depressed or unhappy |
| glum | unhappy and quiet |
| kick in | to start to have an effect |
| more temperate climates | (area) with a higher average temperature and more sunlight |
| populate | live in an area |
| savvy | shrewd, well-informed and perceptive |
| seasonal affective disorder | a form of depression caused by the lack of natural light during the winter months |