

GOOD NATURE

A NEW LIGHT

THE PROS OF SOAKING UP THE SUN

BY TAMMY FENDER

Winter is a wonderful time to celebrate light—the light that surrounds us every day and the light at the center of many holiday traditions around the world. This momentum is never easier to embrace than when you are in Palm Beach come December. Is there anything more inspiring than the light at golden hour, when a shimmer runs through the trees and reflects off the water? We all feel it: the blessing of finding ourselves in one of the most spectacularly beautiful places at just the right moment. The light casts an aura over the whole region, and it feels so generous to be a part of it.

I think about the animals at our house, especially our dogs, who always seem to poke around the garden until they find the sunniest spot for a nap. Something in us just craves the sunlight during this time of year. Of course, researchers have found that sunlight initiates vitamin D production, which helps the body absorb essential nutrients and is believed to trigger the release of serotonin, an important mood-boosting hormone. While we need to be cautious in overindulging in the sun, taking in the morning light while in nature has uplifting benefits that you can feel immediately.

Heading out into the



sun within the first hours of waking enhances our vitality in a way that's physiologically significant. It increases our cortisol levels at a time of day when that alertness is very beneficial. It can also help to support our immune system and metabolism, as well as sharpen our ability to focus all day long. Spending just 5 to 10 minutes in the a.m. sun—walking through your garden, reading a book, sipping your morning drink outdoors—regulates the body's internal clock, setting us in tune with nature and helping to manage our cycles of hunger and sleep. In the



same way, going outside again in the late afternoon, when the light is low in the sky, can help the body transition toward sleep, creating another physiological touchpoint.

If life seems to be moving too fast, consider all the above as a great reason to slow down and get into the sun for a moment or two. Discovering new ways to enjoy, absorb, and reflect the light with our own gestures is a true pleasure when living in a place where we are surrounded by such shimmering, glimmering possibilities. ◀◀

MODERATE EXPOSURE TO THE SUN AT THIS TIME OF YEAR CAN SUPPORT PHYSICAL AND MENTAL WELL-BEING.

