



## Everyday Ways to Ease Depression



### Let Your Pet Nuzzle Blues Away

Sometimes your pet really can be your best friend, and that's good therapy. When you play with him, you take your mind off your problems. And when you take care of him, you're focused on something outside yourself, which can be therapeutic.

### Eat Smart to Lift Mind and Body

A healthy diet can be part of an overall treatment plan. Build your meals and snacks around plenty of fruits, vegetables, and whole grains, and avoid refined foods which interfere with your feel good hormones.



### Choose Foods to Boost Your Mood

Some studies say omega-3 fatty acids and vitamin B12 may ease the mood changes of depression, especially for people who may not get enough of these nutrients. Fatty fish like salmon, tuna, and mackerel have omega-3s. As do Flaxseed, nuts, soybeans, and dark green vegetables. Seafood and fresh meat are good sources of B12.



## Try unrefined Carbs for a Pick-Me-Up

Carbohydrates raise your level of the brain chemical serotonin, which enhances your sense of well-being. Go for unrefined options like, a baked potato, wholegrain rice cakes, natural popcorn or wholemeal pasta. Carbs from vegetables, fruit, and whole grains are great choices -- and also give you healthy fibre.



## Cut down on Caffeine

Do you really need that third cup of coffee, or that so called energy drink? Anxiety often happens along with depression. And too much caffeine can make you nervous, jittery, or anxious. Cutting back on it may help lower your risk for the condition and improve your sleep.



## Treat Your Aches and Pains

When you hurt, it's hard to stay in a good mood. Work with your health care team to treat your depression *and* your pain. Be proactive and make an appointment with your doctor/dentist/therapist....



## Work Out to Change How You Feel

Exercise works almost as well as antidepressants for some people. And you don't have to run a marathon. Just take a walk with a friend. As time goes on, move more until you exercise on most days of the week. You'll feel better physically, sleep better at night, and boost your mood.



## Choose an Exercise You Enjoy

If you don't like to run, you won't last long training for a 10k race. But you will stay with an exercise plan you like. You can take walks, go golfing without a cart, ride a bike, work in your garden, play tennis, or go swimming. The important thing is to pick something you like. Then you'll look forward to it and feel better when you do it.



## Exercise With Others for Support

Connections with other people can help you overcome the sluggish, lonely feelings of depression. Join an exercise group or work out with a friend. You'll stay in touch and have support to keep yourself on track.

## Be Sure You Get Enough Sunlight

Do you feel more depressed during darker, cold months? You may have seasonal affective disorder (SAD). It's most common in the winter, when there's less sunlight. You can treat SAD with light therapy, good diet, St Johns Wort and talk therapy.



## Explore Your Creativity

Painting, photography, music, knitting, or writing in a journal are all ways you can explore your feelings and express what's on your mind. The goal isn't to create a masterpiece. Do something that gives you pleasure. It may help you better understand who you are and how you feel.

## Make Time for Mindful Relaxation

Stress and anxiety can add to your depression symptoms and make it harder to recover. Learn to relax and you can help restore a sense of calm and control. You might consider a yoga or meditation class. Or you could simply listen to soothing music while you take a long, warm bath.





### Get Involved in Your Community

When you spend time with people or causes you care about, you can regain a sense of purpose. And it doesn't take much to get started. You can volunteer with a charity. Or join a discussion group at the library or at church. You'll feel good about yourself when you meet new people and do new things.

### Keep Friends and Family in Your Life

The people who love you want to support you. If you shut them out, they can't. If you let them in, you'll feel a lot better. Call a friend and go for a walk. Have a cup of coffee with your partner. You may find it helps to talk about your depression. It feels good to have someone listen.



### Get the Sleep You Need

Depression makes it hard to get good rest. Some people sleep too much. Others can't fall asleep easily. As you recover, relearn good nighttime habits. Start by going to bed and getting up the same times each day. Use relaxation techniques to help you drift off. Quality shut-eye makes your

mind and body feel better.



### Avoid Alcohol and Drugs

They can slow your recovery from depression or stop it in its tracks. They can also make the condition worse and keep antidepressants from working well. If you have a problem with substance abuse, ask for help now. You'll have a far better chance of getting past depression.

### Stick to Your Treatment

Exercise, a healthy diet, and other good habits may help you feel positive about your life. But they won't replace medical treatment or counselling therapy. Depression can be a serious illness. If you are thinking about harming yourself, get help right away. And never stop or change your treatment without discussing it with your doctor.



My Action Plan for Recovery.....

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