

Depression Management Tips & Techniques

Tips for Dealing with Depression

1. DEVELOP INTERESTS

Interests and activities are very important in mental health, contributing to self-esteem and happiness. They give satisfaction, help make you feel good about yourself, and keep your mind off problems and negative thoughts and emotions. As you develop interests, share them with other people.

2. KEEP POSITIVE

Negative thinking habits play a very important role in depression. Research shows depressed people tend to minimize their accomplishments, talents, and qualities. Happy people experience failure, disappointment, rejection, negative emotions, pain, and great sorrows, too, just like those dealing with depression. But happy people keep a positive attitude by gracefully accepting sadness and suffering as normal parts of life, while doing what they can about their problems. This also makes them more pleasant to be around and improves their social lives.

3. FIX YOUR PERSONAL PROBLEMS

Work on your personal problems, using small steps to make sure you avoid becoming overwhelmed. Work on only 1 or 2 simple things at a time, breaking large or complex problems into goals you can easily accomplish. Don't give up and allow your problems to continue. Brainstorm solutions and ask other people for ideas. Don't let negative thought habits interfere with problem solving. Keep an open mind to all possible solutions.

4. CREATE A POSITIVE SOCIAL LIFE

Work to make your social interactions more positive by showing warmth toward other people, taking an interest in them, developing and sharing interests and activities, etc. Good social skills and a good network of friendships ranging from casual to intimate ones help prevent depression after life stresses and speeds recovery from depression.

5. STOP BAD BEHAVIOR

When you complain, cry, talk of sad feelings, or discuss problems, your friends and loved ones probably respond with sympathy and tender loving care. Unfortunately, these loving responses reward and help maintain the depressive behaviors. Some friends or family even take over chores for a depressed person who stays in bed or asks for help. This rewards the passive or dependent behavior. Many depressed people eat, spend money excessively, abuse addictive substances, or have sex without love to feel better. Eliminate these and any other subtle rewards for depressive behavior.

6. BE REALISTIC

Re-examine your expectations or priorities in life and, if necessary, adjust them to suit reality better. Depressed people often think they can't be happy without certain things, such as a lover, a particular lover, material possessions, a much higher income, etc. You can eliminate such problems by changing your negative thinking and learning to accept the situation. Certain situations or troublesome people simply won't change. When you can do something about a problem, however, you should.

7. BECOME ACTIVE

Studies show that regular exercise can be as effective as antidepressant medication at increasing energy levels and decreasing feelings of fatigue. To get the most benefit, aim for 30 minutes of exercise per day. But you can start small. Short 10-minute bursts of activity can have a positive effect on your mood.

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8. FIX YOUR DIET

What you eat has a direct impact on the way you feel. Aim for a balanced diet of protein, complex carbohydrates, fruits and vegetables. To avoid feeling irritable and tired, aim to eat something at least every 3-4 hours.

9. TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF

In order to overcome depression, you have to take care of yourself. This includes following a healthy lifestyle, learning to manage stress, setting limits on what you're able to do, adopting healthy habits, and scheduling fun activities into your day.

- **Aim for 8 hours of sleep.** Depression typically involves sleep problems. Whether you're sleeping too little or too much, your mood suffers. Get on a better sleep schedule [by learning healthy sleep habits](#).
- **Expose yourself to a little sunlight every day.** Take a short walk outdoors, have your coffee outside, people-watch on a park bench, or sit out in the garden.
- **Keep stress in check.** Not only does stress prolong and worsen depression, but it can also trigger it. Figure out all the things in your life that are stressing you out. Once you've identified your stressors, you can make a plan to avoid them or minimize their impact.
- **Practice relaxation techniques.** A daily relaxation practice can help relieve symptoms of depression, reduce stress, and boost feelings of joy and well-being. Try yoga, deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, or meditation.



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