

How to Fight Depression

Depression can drain your energy, leaving you feeling empty and fatigued. This can make it difficult to muster the strength or desire to seek treatment. However, there are small steps you can take to help you feel more in control and improve your overall sense of well-being. Read on to learn how to incorporate these strategies in a way that makes sense for you.

1. Meet yourself where you are.

- a. Depression is common. It affects millions of people, including some in your life. You may not realize they face similar challenges, emotions, and obstacles.
- b. The key to self-treatment for depression is to be open, accepting, and loving toward yourself and what you're going through.

2. If you need to wallow, wallow - but do so constructively.

- a. Suppressing your feelings and emotions may seem like a strategic way to cope with the negative symptoms of depression. But this technique is ultimately unhealthy.
- b. If you're having a down day, have it. Let yourself feel the emotions - but don't stay - there.

3. Know that today isn't indicative of tomorrow.

- a. Today's mood, emotions, or thoughts don't belong to tomorrow.
- b. If you were unsuccessful at getting out of bed or accomplishing your goals today, remember that you haven't lost tomorrow's opportunity to try again.

4. Assess the parts instead of generalizing the whole.

- a. Depression can tinge recollections with negative emotions.
- b. You may find yourself focusing on the one thing that went wrong instead of the many things that went right.
- c. Try to stop this overgeneralization. Push yourself to recognize the good. If it helps, write down what was happy about the event or day. Then write down what went wrong.

5. Do the opposite of what the 'depression voice' suggests.

- a. The negative, irrational voice in your head may talk you out of self-help. However, if you can learn to recognize it, you can learn to replace it. Use logic as a weapon. Address each thought individually as it occurs.

6. Set attainable goals.

- a. A lengthy to-do list may be so weighty that you'd rather do nothing.
- b. Instead of compiling a long list of tasks, consider setting one or two smaller goals. For example, don't clean the house; rather simply take the trash out.

7. Reward your efforts.

- a. All goals are worthy of recognition, and all successes are worthy of celebration.
- b. When you achieve a goal, do your best to recognize it.
- c. You may not feel like celebrating with a cake and confetti, but recognizing your own successes can be a very powerful weapon against depression's negative weight.

8. You may find it helpful to create a routine.

- a. If depressive symptoms disrupt your daily routine, setting a gentle schedule may help you feel in control.
- b. But these plans don't have to map out an entire day.
- c. Your schedule could focus on the time before work or right before bed. Perhaps it's only for the weekends.
- d. Focus on creating a loose, but structured, routine that can help you keep your daily pace going.

9. Do something you enjoy.

- a. Depression can push you to give into your fatigue.
- b. Depression may feel more powerful than happy emotions.
- c. Try to push back and do something you love - something that's relaxing, but energizing. It could be playing an instrument, painting, hiking, or biking.

10. Play or listen to music.

- a. Music may be especially beneficial when performed in group settings, such as a musical ensemble or band.
- b. You can also reap some of the same rewards simply by listening.

11. Spend time in nature.

- a. Mother Nature can have a powerful influence on depression.
- b. Exposure to sunlight may offer some of the same benefits.
- c. It can increase your serotonin levels, which can provide a temporary mood boost.

12. Spend time with loved ones.

- a. Depression can tempt you to isolate yourself and withdraw from your friends and family, but face-to face time can help wash away those tendencies.
- b. If you're unable to spend time together in person, phone calls or video chats can also be helpful.

13. Try something new entirely.

- a. When you do the same thing day after day, you use the same parts of your brain.
- b. You can challenge your neurons and alter your brain chemistry by doing something entirely different.

- c. Research also shows doing new things can improve your overall well-being and strengthen your social relationships.
- d. To reap these benefits, consider trying a new sport, taking a creative class, or learning a new cooking technique.

14. Volunteering can be a great way to do both.

- a. Knock out a few birds with one stone — spending time with other people and doing something new by volunteering and giving your time to someone or something else.

15. You can also use this as a way to practice gratitude.

- a. When you do something you love, or even when you find a new activity you enjoy, you may be able to boost your mental health more by taking time to be thankful for it.

16. Incorporating meditation may help ground your thoughts.

- a. Stress and anxiety can prolong your depression symptoms.
- b. Finding relaxation techniques can help you lower stress and invite more joy and balance into your day.
- c. Research suggests activities like meditation, yoga, deep breathing, and even journaling may help you improve your sense of well-being and feel more connected to what's happening around you.

17. What you eat and drink can also affect how you feel.

- a. There's no magic diet that will treat depression (though a vegan diet helps a lot!).
- b. What you put into your body can have a real and significant impact on the way you feel.

18. If you're up for exercise, consider a walk around the block.

- a. On days when you feel as if you can't get out of bed, exercise may seem like the last thing you'd want to do.
- b. However, exercise and physical activity can be powerful depression fighters.

19. Getting enough sleep can also have a noticeable effect.

- a. Sleep disturbances are common with depression.
- b. You may not sleep well, or you may sleep too much.
- c. Both can make depression symptoms worse.
- d. Aim for eight hours of sleep per night. Try to get into a healthy sleeping routine.

20. Consider clinical treatment.

- a. You may also find it helpful to speak to a professional about what you're going through.