



DEPRESSION RECOVERY TIPS

If you have been through a depression, you might remember that the hardest thing was thinking you would never feel better. It is difficult but important to remember that most depressed people do get better. You have to hold on to hope, and remember that depression is treatable.

Keep in mind that it does not improve much without help. Depending on your depression, that help might be psychotherapy, medications, both, or another approach.

If you take medications for depression, take them as prescribed. They will not work as well otherwise. If you do not like their effects, talk with your prescriber. Often there is a way to make things better.

Psychotherapy works best if you keep your appointments, speak openly about your goals and concerns, and think about what you have discussed. Some therapists assign homework. It is important to practice your new skills.

You can take other steps to help recovery. Here are some suggestions:

Fake it until you make it. It sounds corny, but going through the motions can help. Even if you do not feel great at first at work or with friends, keep at it. It will get easier with time.

Deal with stresses. If your depression partly feeds on real troubles in your life such as a bad job or relationship, no pill will get you well unless you also deal with the stressful situations. With help from therapy or otherwise, one way or another you may need to make changes in your life.

Make time for fun. Seeing a friend, listening to music or exercising are all activities that can cheer you up. The more time you spend in a better mood, the easier it will be to beat the depression.

Do not neglect yourself. Many of us get depressed because of stressful caregiving duties. If you spend all your time tending to

a sick relative, for example, you must find a way to give yourself a break occasionally. Even if you cannot find a good reason for feeling depressed, make time to care for yourself. Keep your home clean and neat. Take care of your body, appearance, diet, activity and sleep.

Eat well. Eat enough, but avoid the temptation to use food for comfort. It can be tempting to lift your mood with alcohol or recreational drugs, but this is a bad idea. It may work for a while, but there is no free lunch. The payback is tough.

Stay active. Depression can make you feel like you do not want to leave your bed, but keeping active is a great idea. Even if you need to push yourself, exercise is a good way to lift your spirits. Studies have shown exercise to be a good antidepressant.

Do not isolate yourself. Find a way to be around people who make you feel good about yourself and about the future. A connection with others is very healing.

Consider practicing spirituality. It can sustain your hope and help you keep your eye on the light at the end of the tunnel.

Get a second opinion. If your depression hangs on and what you are doing is not helping enough, try asking for a second opinion. You may be getting the wrong treatment for you, and you can choose from many different ways to deal with depression. Ask around, and find someone qualified to help.

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