

## Self Help Tips for Dealing with Depression

Write down two activities to do that day, and do them!

Exercise. Especially good is to take a walk, alone or with friends.

Do things that you used to enjoy: go see a movie, start up a favorite hobby, or just hang out with friends and talk.

Don't get more than 8 hours sleep a day. Over-sleeping has been shown to increase depressive feelings. Get up and get moving!

Get outside in the sun between 10 and 2. Bright light has been shown to have an antidepressant effect on the body. Light is especially good if you suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder.

Abstain from alcohol and drugs. Seems like a no-brainer, but if you are addicted to either, it might not be so easy. Both alcohol and drugs induce depression, and also prevents any antidepressant medications from working effectively.

Products that contain aspartame (products like Equal or Nutrasweet) have been shown to increase symptoms of depression when consumed. So avoid them like the plague!

Break large sized tasks into several smaller ones. By taking on too much responsibility and setting overly difficult goals, you set yourself up for failure, which brings on depressive feelings.

Look into spirituality/religion. Participating in religious events has been shown to release endorphins in your brain, which lead to a better mood.

Recognize that there may be certain times of the day that you feel better, so use that to your advantage!

Use the six step problem solving method:

1. Write down exactly what you believe the main problem is.
2. Write down all possible solutions, even the bad one.
3. Think about each possible solution in practical terms.
4. Choose the most practical solution plan.
5. Figure out exactly HOW you are going to carry out that solution.
6. DO IT!

Therapy and medications are also available to help with depressive symptoms. But most importantly...don't blame yourself for feeling this way. It is most definitely NOT your fault. It is a disease.