

Review Article on Medicine Free Treatment and Prevention of Depression

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Abstract: *Depression is a type of serious neurological disorder, characterized by disturbances in sleep and appetite as well as deficit in cognition and energy. Depression can be potentially life threatening condition that has affected millions of people across the globe and can occur at any age groups from childhood to later life. It is known to exert a huge burden upon the society. Major depressive disorder is a complex and frequent psychiatric condition that poses significant challenges to both the patients who experience it and the physicians who treat them. The goal of therapy is for patients to achieve remission, which requires identifying and measuring symptoms at the outset and throughout treatment to document both response and resistance to treatment. . The life time prevalence of depression is between 10-20% in general population worldwide, with a female to male ratio about 5:2. Typically, the course of the disease is recurrent, and most patients recover from depressive episodes. However, a substantial proportion of patients become chronic and after 5 or 10 years of potential follow up, about 12% and 7% of them respectively are still depressed. For many people living with depression, prescription medications can be wonder drugs. Antidepressants, especially selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) like Prozac (fluoxetine) and Zoloft (sertraline). They can have side effects and can be expensive depending on your health insurance coverage. There are many ways to counter some of the symptoms of depression that don't involve prescription medications. If you have depression you might like to try managing it naturally, without medication, or supplement your antidepressant with other tactics. If so, check out these natural alternatives and then talk to your doctor about which might make sense as part of your treatment regimen.*

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I. INTRODUCTION

Therapy, medication, self-help? If you're confused by all the different treatment options for depression, here's how to decide the best approach for you. When you're depressed, it can feel like you'll never get out from under a dark shadow. However, even the most severe depression is treatable. So, if your depression is keeping you from living the life you want to, don't hesitate to seek help. From therapy to medication to healthy lifestyle changes, there are many different treatment options available. Of course, just as no two people are affected by depression in exactly the same way, neither is there a "one size fits all" treatment to cure depression. What works for one person might not work for another. By becoming as informed as possible, though, you can find the treatments that can help you overcome depression, feel happy and hopeful again, and reclaim your life.

Depression treatment tips:

Learn as much as you can about your depression.

It's important to determine whether your depression symptoms are due to an underlying medical condition. If so, that condition will need to be treated first. The severity of your depression is also a factor. The more severe the depression, the more intensive the treatment you're likely to need.



It takes time to find the right treatment.

It might take some trial and error to find the treatment and support that works best for you. Example, if you decide to pursue therapy it may take a few attempts to find a therapist that you really click with. Or you may try an antidepressant, only to find that you don't need it if you take a daily half hour walk. Be open to change and a little experimentation.

Don't rely on medications alone.

Although medication can relieve the symptoms of depression, it is not usually suitable for long-term use. Other treatments, including exercise and therapy, can be just as effective as medication, often even more so, but don't come with unwanted side effects. If you do decide to try medication, remember that medication works best when you make healthy lifestyle changes as well.

Get social support.

The more you cultivate your social connections, the more protected you are from depression. If you are feeling stuck, don't hesitate to talk to trusted family members or friends, or seek out new connections at a depression support group, for example. Asking for help is not a sign of weakness and it won't mean you're a burden to others. Often, the simple act of talking to someone face-to-face can be an enormous help.

Treatment takes time and commitment.

All of these depression treatments take time, and sometimes it might feel overwhelming or frustratingly slow. That is normal. Recovery usually has its ups and downs.

Lifestyle changes: An essential part of depression treatment

Lifestyle changes are simple but powerful tools in the treatment of depression. Sometimes they might be all you need. Even if you need other treatment as well, making the right lifestyle changes can help lift depression faster—and prevent it from coming back.

Lifestyle changes to treat the depression

Exercise.

Regular exercise can be as effective at treating depression as medication. Not only does exercise boost serotonin, endorphins, and other feel-good brain chemicals, it triggers the growth of new brain cells and connections, just like antidepressants do. Best of all, you don't have to train for a marathon in order to reap the benefits. Even a half-hour daily walk can make a big difference. For maximum results, aim for 30 to 60 minutes of aerobic activity on most days.

Social support.

Strong social networks reduce isolation, a key risk factor for depression. Keep in regular contact with friends and family, or consider joining a class or group. Volunteering is a wonderful way to get social support and help others while also helping yourself.

Nutrition.

Eating well is important for both your physical and mental health. Eating small, well-balanced meals throughout the day will help you keep your energy up and minimize mood swings. While you may be drawn to sugary foods for the quick boost they provide, complex carbohydrates are a better choice. They'll get you going without the all-too-soon sugar crash.

Sleep.

Sleep has a strong effect on mood. When you don't get enough sleep, your depression symptoms will be worse. Sleep deprivation exacerbates irritability, moodiness, sadness, and fatigue. Make sure you're getting enough sleep each night. Very few people do well on less than seven hours a night. Aim for somewhere between seven to nine hours each night.



Stress reduction.

Make changes in your life to help manage and reduce stress. Too much stress exacerbates depression and puts you at risk for future depression. Take the aspects of your life that stress you out, such as work overload or unsupportive relationships, and find ways to minimize their impact.

Treat Depression without Medication:

For many people living with depression, prescription medications can be wonder drugs. Antidepressants, especially selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) like Prozac (fluoxetine) and Zoloft (sertraline). They can have side effects and can be expensive depending on your health insurance coverage.

There are many ways to counter some of the symptoms of depression that don't involve prescription medications. If you have depression you might like to try managing it naturally, without medication, or supplement your antidepressant with other tactics. If so, check out these natural alternatives and then talk to your doctor about which might make sense as part of your treatment regimen.

Natural Ways to Manage Depression

Always take symptoms of depression seriously as depression doesn't just go away on its own. While there are many things you can do to support your mental health, don't try to just handle your symptoms alone. Talk to your doctor and discuss some of the self-help strategies that may support your treatment.

Get More Sleep

Sleep and mood go hand in hand. Get too little of the former and the latter is bound to flag (whether you have depression or not). Make sure you have what sleep experts call "good sleep hygiene."¹

This means you keep consistent bedtimes and wake-up times, your bedroom is set up for sound sleep (it's dark, quiet, and uncluttered), you have a relaxing bedtime routine that doesn't involve sitting in front of a screen, and so on.

Whether you can't seem to get any sleep or can't seem to stop sleeping, there are steps you can take to try to improve the quality of your sleep.

- Give yourself a period to unwind before you go to bed; do something relaxing and avoid stressful tasks or thoughts.
- Go to bed at the same time each night, and set an alarm so that you wake at the same time each morning.
- Have a consistent bedtime routine.
- Turn off your devices and try reading a book for a few minutes.

Also, try to spend a little time outside each day, even on days when you are tempted to draw the shades and hide indoors. Light plays an important role in regulating sleep cycles and circadian rhythms, so a lack of sunshine may be making it more difficult to sleep at night.

Cut Back on Caffeine

Coffee, tea, soda, and even chocolate are steeped in caffeine. It's fine to indulge in a reasonable amount of caffeine in the morning, but if you do, don't consume caffeine after late afternoon so it doesn't interfere with sleep.

If you do tend to rely on caffeine, try cutting back gradually in order to avoid unpleasant symptoms of caffeine withdrawal. When you are craving a soda or cup of coffee, try going for a short walk around the block instead.

What to Know About Caffeine Use

Get More Vitamin D

There's some evidence that a deficiency of this important nutrient could play a role in depression. If you aren't getting enough vitamin D through your diet and lifestyle (like sun exposure), ask your doctor if you should try taking a supplement.

Certain nutrient deficiencies can play a role in depression symptoms. If you are having a difficult time spending enough time outdoors or if overcast weather conditions make it hard to get sunshine, a supplement may be useful.

Go Natural

For treating mild to moderate depression, dietary supplements such as St. John's Wort, S-adenosylmethionine (SAM-e), and 5-Hydroxytryptophan (5-HTP) may be worth a try.⁴

Be careful with these substances, though. Don't take any of them without checking with your doctor first. Just because they're available without a prescription and are touted as natural doesn't mean they're always safe.



For example, mixing St. John's wort with an SSRI such as Prozac can lead to a complication called serotonin syndrome.⁶ Also, SAM-e carries a risk for hypomania/mania in bipolar disorder.

Tap Your Spirituality

No need to join a church, synagogue, or mosque (although certainly for many people dealing with depression, religion can be an impactful source of support). But simple daily practices such as meditation or adding to a list of things you're grateful can help boost mood and overall well-being.

Research indicates that an intervention called mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT), which combines elements of cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT) with mindfulness meditation, can be helpful in treating depression and preventing future relapses of symptoms.⁷

Studies also suggest that different types of mindfulness meditative practices can also be effective in the treatment of depression.⁸

There are many different types of meditation, but you can get started with a simple meditative exercise:

1. Sit comfortably
2. Close your eyes
3. Breathe naturally
4. Focus on how your body feels while you breathe
5. When your mind wanders, redirect attention back to your breathing

6 Meditation Techniques to Try

Get More Exercise

This doesn't mean train for a marathon, but it does mean putting in a half-hour or so of low-intensity activity each day, which has been found to be effective in improving mood and quality of life. Even better, take it outdoors. Fresh air and sunshine are especially healing for folks dealing with a special form of depression known as seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

While research has shown that regular physical activity can be effective in both the prevention and treatment of depression, it can be hard to start an exercise habit when you're depressed. Lack of energy and low mood may mean that you simply feel too fatigued to get up and get active.

Some things that you can try to stick to your habit:

- Enlist a friend. Ask a loved one to walk with you or do another form of exercise at least a few times a week. Having the support of a friend can not only help get you into a routine, but it can also help you maintain those social connections when you are feeling down.
- Remind yourself of the benefits. Getting started is tough, but doing it is something that will help you feel better in the long-term.
- Start small. Try walking for just a few minutes each day, then work on gradually increasing your walks.

How Physical Exercise Benefits Mental Health

Avoid Alcohol

Alcohol in and of itself is a depressant. Oddly enough, drinking can interfere with sleep, and quality sleep is a key to battling the blues. While alcohol might seem like a quick fix to escape what you are feeling, it can actually make many of the symptoms of depression feel much worse.¹¹

Not only that, but it can decrease inhibitions and potentially lead to risky behaviours and bad decisions that can have long-term consequences.

If you have been misusing alcohol or other substances and need help quitting, talk to your doctor. You may also have an alcohol or substance use disorder as well. Withdrawal symptoms may temporarily worsen symptoms of depression, so you may need extra assistance as you go through this process.

How Substance Use Can Lead to Mood Disorders

Eat: 'Good food good mood

What you put in your mouth can have a direct effect on how you think and feel. Make sure to eat a well-balanced diet, one that's rich in nutrients and low in saturated fat. A nutritionist or dietitian can help you analyze your eating habits and pinpoint potential nutrient deficiencies that could contribute to depression.



Some foods that may be beneficial when you have depression:

- Fish: Research has found that people who ate a diet high in fish were less likely to have symptoms of depression.¹² Fish are high in omega-3 fats, which play a role in helping neurotransmitters such as serotonin work in the brain.
- Nuts: Nuts are also a good source of omega-3 fats and one study indicated that people who ate walnuts were 26% less likely to have symptoms of depression.¹³
- Probiotics: Research is increasingly pointing to a connection between gut and brain health. Foods high in probiotics include yogurt, kefir, kimchi, and kombucha.

Foods to Help Fight Depression

Change Your Thoughts

Pollyanna-ish as it may sound, thinking good thoughts can help you feel good. Your thoughts truly do have a direct bearing on your mood. If you're struggling with negativity, consider seeing a therapist to help you learn ways to counter it.

One of the most popular and effective treatments used in the treatment of depression is cognitive-behavioural therapy (CBT).¹⁵ This form of psychotherapy focuses on identifying negative thinking patterns and then replacing them with more positive ones. There are different ways that you can practice some of these ideas on your own.

Learn to Recognize Negative Thinking

Sometimes these thoughts can be obvious, such as times when you berate or criticize yourself. Other times, they can be more subtle. You might find yourself engaging in things like catastrophizing or all-or-nothing thinking.

Catastrophizing involves always anticipating negative outcomes. All-or-nothing thinking means that you think of things as either successes or failures. Once you get better at recognizing these cognitive patterns, you can start working on some healthier replacements.

Reframe Your Thoughts

When you find yourself having a negative thought, consciously reframe it in a positive way. For example, you might replace something like "This will never work" with something more positive such as, "Here are a few things that I can try that will help me get started." Shifting your focus to your strengths and abilities can help you maintain a more positive mindset.

Tips for Changing Negative Thinking

Get a Handle on Stress

Stress can drive up levels of a brain chemical called cortisol, which has been found to be higher in folks with depression. There are lots of strategies for coping with stress, such as time management, meditation, and biofeedback training.

Some stress-relieving activities that you might want to incorporate into your daily life include:

- Deep breathing: A few minutes to slow your breathing and focus your attention on your body in the moment can help you get a better handle on your worries.
- Exercise: Regular physical activity is a great way to blow off steam.
- Progressive muscle relaxation: This process involves intentionally tightening muscles throughout the body, holding that tension for several counts, and then releasing that tension until the muscles are completely lax. With regular practice, you may be able to learn how to intentionally relax your body fairly quickly whenever you are feeling tense.¹⁷ Learning to manage your stress takes time and practice. Talk to your doctor or therapist about other strategies you might try to minimize the stress and your response to it.

Stress Management Techniques for All Types of Stress

Tend to Your Social Life:

When you're depressed, there's no reason to go it alone—and all sorts of reasons to reach out to friends and family. Make plans with loved ones and keep those dates. Join a club or sign up for a group activity such as a local dodgeball league, for example, or a French class.

Other things you might try:

- Join a support group. Talking to other people who are facing the same experiences and challenges can be informative and helpful.



- Schedule activities. Having routines can be helpful when you are going through depression. Create a daily schedule that includes spending time with others. You are more likely to stick to it if it's a scheduled event.

- Volunteer. Joining a cause that you care about is a great way to meet new people and expand your social circle.

The problem is that depression often causes people to withdraw, which only further exacerbates feelings of isolation and loneliness. Even when you don't feel like going out or being social, try reaching out in whatever way is most comfortable for you. Enlist a few of your closest loved ones who understand what you are experiencing.

Doing the things you used to do might not bring you quite the same enjoyment, but getting out of the house and spending time with people who care about you can help you feel better.

Forest therapy

Forest therapy or "forest bathing" refers to visiting a forest or engaging in various therapeutic activities in a forest environment to improve one's health and wellbeing. Societies have been urbanizing rapidly and more people reside in an urban environment with limited access to nature; therefore, diverse efforts including political and landscaping efforts have been made to make nature more accessible. With an increasing awareness of health benefits of forest therapy, it has been implemented on diverse population. Particularly, the psychological benefits of forest therapy have received special attention as people residing in urban environments have been reported to be at an increased risk of prolonged exposure to stressful situations and mental health problems. Compared to control groups, forest therapy significantly improves adults' mental health by decreasing stress, depression, anxiety, and anger levels

A systematic review summarizes the results of the available research studies and provides synthesized evidence on the effectiveness of those studies. It enables researchers to identify the current state of the science, areas for future researchers to improve upon, and provides strong evidence for up-to-date practices and policy developments. It is also beneficial for emerging topics that require systematic evaluation and synthesis of the evidence quality (e.g., feasibility and effectiveness of intervention) as well as well-established areas of research with accumulated scientific evidence that need be updated regularly.

Despite the increased attention to the various health benefits of forest therapy, until now, systematic reviews of the body of evidence for the effectiveness of forest therapy on mental health have not been conducted. A clearer and comprehensive understanding of the effectiveness of forest therapy on mental health is important for further refinement of forest therapy programs. Among the several mental health outcomes included in the forest therapy research, our paper will focus on depression. Depression is the leading cause of disability; approximately 350 million (5% of the world's population) suffer from this debilitating disorder. The specific aims of this study were to: (1) provide a broad overview and synthesize the evidence on the usefulness of forest therapy to improve the level of depressive symptoms in adults; and (2) assess the methodological rigor and scientific evidence quality of existing research studies to guide future studies evaluating the effects of forest therapy on adults' experiencing depressive symptoms. In the present review, forest therapy was defined as visiting a forest or engaging in various therapeutic activities in a forest environment to improve one's health and wellbeing

Health benefits of forest therapy

- Reduces stress related hormones
- Increase parasympathetic nerve activity
- Suppresses sympathetic nerve activity
- Decreases the heart contraction phase diastolic blood pressure and pulse rate
- Relieves tension and elevated mood
- Boosts the immune system with an increase in the count of the body natural killer
- Increases anticancer protein production
- Alleviates stressful condition such as tension, depression, anger, fatigue, confusion
- Improves alertness, vigor, vitality and enhance their life energy
- Improve subjective symptoms of physical mental health
- Reduces the systolic blood pressure, diastolic blood pressure and improve the autonomic nervous system such as decreases in pulse rate



- Improve physical condition through exercise and rehabilitation

The Uses and Benefits of Music Therapy:

Music therapy:

Sound healing therapy uses aspects of music to improve physical and emotional health and well-being. The person being treated partakes in the experience with a trained practitioner. Music therapy may involve.

Listening to music

Singing along to music

Moving to the beat of the music

Meditating

Playing an instrument

Healing with sound is believed to date back to ancient Greece, when music was used in an attempt to cure mental disorders. Throughout history, music has been used to boost morale in military troops, help people work faster and more productively, and even ward off evil spirits by chanting. More recently, research has linked music to a number of health benefits, from boosting immune function and lowering stress levels to improving the health of premature babies.

Types of sound or music therapy:

There are a few different types of sound therapy, each with different benefits, though not all have been supported through research.

Guided meditation

Guided meditation is a form of sound healing in which you meditate to voiced instruction, either in a session or class, or using a video or app. Meditation can involve chanting or repeating mantras or prayers.

Research Trusted Source has found that meditation offers a number of health benefits, including:

- stress reduction
- decreased anxiety and depression
- improved memory
- reduced blood pressure
- pain reduction
- lower cholesterol
- decreased risk of heart disease and stroke

Neurologic music therapy

Music therapy can reduce stress and promote relaxation. It's been shown to be more effective than prescription drugs in reducing anxiety levels before surgery. A study published in 2017 found that a 30-minute music therapy session combined with traditional care after spinal surgery reduced pain.

Music therapy is administered by a credentialed provider who assesses the individual's needs. Treatment involves creating, listening, singing, or moving to music. It's used for physical rehab, pain management, and brain injuries.

Bonny Method

Named after Helen L. Bonny, PhD, the Bonny Method of Guided Imagery and Music (GIM) classical music and imagery to help explore personal growth, consciousness, and transformation.

A 2017 study showed promising evidence that a series of GIM sessions could improve psychological and physiological health in adults with medical and mental health needs.

Nordoff-Robbins

This sound healing method is delivered by skilled musicians who complete the Nordoff-Robbins 2-year master's program. They use music familiar to those being treated, create new music together, or work toward a performance.



The Nordoff-Robbins approach is used to treat children with developmental delays (as well as their parents), mental health issues, learning difficulties, autism spectrum disorder, dementia, and other conditions.

Tuning fork therapy

Tuning fork therapy uses calibrated metal tuning forks to apply specific vibrations to different parts of the body. This can help release tension and energy, and promote emotional balance. It supposedly works similarly to acupuncture, using sound frequencies for point stimulation instead of needles.

There is some research suggesting that tuning fork therapy may help relieve muscle and bone pain.

Brainwave entrainment

Also known as binaural beats, this method stimulates the brain into a specific state using pulsing sound to encourage your brain waves to align to the frequency of the beat. It's supposed to help induce enhanced focus, entranced state, relaxation, and sleep. Though more research is needed, there's some evidence Trusted Source that audible brainwave entrainment reduces anxiety, pain, and symptoms of premenstrual syndrome, as well as improves behavioural problems in children.

Mental health: A world of depression

A global view of the burden caused by depression. (International wecakkly

Kerri Smith

Depression can strike anybody, anytime, anywhere. According to the World Health Organization (WHO), nearly 57 million, or 1 in every 22 Indians suffer from depression. Depending on the symptoms, depression is termed as mild, moderate, and severe. The reasons for depression can be an external event (like loss of a job, death in the family or romantic break-up) or internal, due to hormonal or biochemical imbalances. Typically, depending on the severity of the depression, psychiatrists treat depression, with drugs like tricyclic antidepressants (TCAs), selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs) and selective serotonin noradrenaline reuptake inhibitors (SSNRIs).

But not all of those who are depressed, want to be treated with drugs due to side effects, that include nausea, loss of sexual desire, low appetite, drowsiness, blurred vision and insomnia.

There are many natural ways to alleviate depression and boost mood. Each of the 25 natural ways have been researched to determine that there are studies that prove their efficacy. These alternatives can be employed by those that suffer from mild, moderate and severe depression. Results will vary from person to person, and may not be a complete cure, but will help with managing depression better. We don't advise stopping medication if it has been prescribed, and we are big believers of talk therapy as an ongoing process, to deal with more than just the symptoms. Do consult with your therapist before starting on any natural alternatives.

Here are 25 ways to curb depression naturally.

- 1) Exercise: It's simple; any form of exercise, releases feel good chemicals like endorphins, dopamine and serotonin. Do what you love doing; be it swimming, running, yoga or walking and you can have an immediate impact on your well-being and boosting mood.
- 2) Do the new: Changing your routine can help. Visit the library. Go on a walking tour. Visit a new cafe. Plan a day trip. Anything new can help change the way you are feeling and may lead to feeling more mindful. It also activates the dopamine pathways in your brain that is in charge of rewards.
- 3) Smile more: Smile and the world smiles with you. Cry and you cry alone. The old adage is probably true. Smiling makes you likeable, therefore more sociable, it also makes you feel good in the head because every time you smile you release dopamine, endorphins and serotonin in your head. Did we also mention that is great for your physical health? Say cheese, please!
- 4) Gratitude: Being grateful multiplies our happiness. It forces the brain to shift focus on what's going wrong to what's going right. Research from University of Indiana and University of California Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center suggest that being grateful leads to well-being and decreased depression. Thanksgiving doesn't have to be once a year!



5) Mindful meditation: Close your eyes, sit in a quiet spot and focus on your breathing or watch your thoughts float by, be aware of your body. Zen Buddhist and Indian monks have known this for centuries. Perhaps that explains why they look so peaceful. Mindful meditation slows the mind down and helps it to focus on the present, quelling anxiety, and lowering depression. According to the 47 studies analysed in JAMA Internal Medicine meditation lessens pain, depression and anxiety.

6) Listen to music: According to a paper published in the UK-based Journal of Advanced Nursing, listening to music can lower depression by 25 percent, and it is also known to improve self-esteem. Listening to your favorite music can put you in a good mood and even get you to shake a hip.

7) Nature: Cities, with its traffic, closed spaces, office cubicles and tall buildings can make us depressed. Spending time in green spaces: with trees, water bodies, animals and birds can restore us emotionally, spiritually, physically and psychologically. Make an effort to get out of the city, or find green oases within the city, to restore inner balance and stay refreshed.

8) Eat right: Being depressed sometimes can lead to a reduced appetite. This in turn could lead to health-related complications that might further worsen the depression. Eating well-balanced meals at the right time can alleviate mood. Also, eating certain foods rich in Omega-3 (salmon, sardines), greens, legumes, berries, walnuts, lean meat, dairy, and whole grains can lead to a reduction in depression.

9) Aroma therapy: According to Mayo Clinic, essential oils extracted from plants and flowers that are used in aromatherapy can have a soothing effect on our moods. It can also reduce pain and improve sleep. Essential oils made from extracts of bergamot, lavender and Roman chamomile help with specifically alleviating depression.

10) Animals: Pets are great mood boosters. They offer unconditional love, never judge, and they are there in time of need of emotional support. In a world where everything is transactional, they come as a breath of fresh air, as they don't demand anything back other than care. Studies suggest that having a cat or a dog as a pet has therapeutic effects. Animal-assisted therapy has become a globally accepted form of therapy for those who are depressed, anxious or suffer from PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder).

11) Dance: Moving the body to a beat is an age old way to celebrate and feel joyful. Dance is part of social ceremonies, religious ceremonies and romantic dates. Dance movement therapy has been used to help individuals express themselves and free themselves of emotions that kept them fettered. Science backs this theory up. In a study titled 'The effect of dance over depression' it was found that dance lowers levels of depression.

12) Talk therapy: Psychotherapy has been widely to treat depression. Sharing one's thoughts, feelings and experiences helps in the unburdening of negative emotions that's pulling one down. Talk therapy has been widely acknowledged as one of the most proven and effective ways to treat depression. Even those with severe depression, already on medication, can help from talking to a qualified counsellor or psychologist.

13) Journaling: Sometimes just the act of putting feelings down on paper works wonders on peeling layers of emotions and thoughts that are causing depression. Journaling helps those who are depressed, to articulate what's bothering them, and labeling the negative feelings and bad experiences. In doing so, the person begins to understand and think through the current situation, and in the process ends up feeling better, or perhaps arriving at a solution.

14) Motivational books and movies: Reading a motivational book or quote, watching a movie that inspires or seeing a poster that has uplifting message and imagery can be a huge mood booster. It can alter negative thinking and allow the depressed individual to feel positive. The books, quotes, movies and posters that might help with depression vary from person to person. Get online and read reviews to form an opinion on what might work for you individually.

15) Feeling depressed about feeling depressed: This may come as a surprise. But just the mere acceptance of the fact that you are depressed may help deal with depression. Sometimes depression is caused by unforeseen events like bad health, job loss, death, divorce or failure in exams. This leads to feelings of sadness and low-esteem. One of the issues is the expectation of false appearances where one is supposed to be "fine" all the time. In many cases, not feeling fine, and feeling low, can lead to more feelings of despondency, because one feels low about feeling depressed. This can exacerbate depression. Accepting that this too shall pass helps managing negative feelings better.

16) Work hard: Those who are depressed sometimes feel that they don't want to get out bed, get dressed and go to work. Depression is a sure fire to lose the plot, dig oneself into a hole, and feel like not doing anything. The best way to



snap out of this is shake off the feeling and get down to work. This is easier said than done because it is so difficult. Forcing oneself to action against the will to stay still provides almost immediate benefits. Seek the help of a family member, friend or colleague to push you to do this.

17) Have fun: Discovering things that you enjoy doing and gives you pleasure is an important aspect to reclaiming your life and striving for emotional wellness. Doing things that are fun and happiness inducing can strip away the stresses locked within. These activities will be different for different individuals. One way to lock down on these activities are to look back at what brought a smile to your face and makes your heart feel lighter.

18) Yoga: The ancient practice of yoga with its many physical poses, deep breathing and meditation provides a burst of positivity, the ability to deal with pain, increases awareness, reduces depression and promotes good physical health. In many studies and trials yoga has time and again proven that it is a powerful weapon against depression. No wonder it has become a global phenomenon. The good thing is that is that yoga can be practiced by all, regardless of whether they are young or old; fit or unfit; and flexible or stiff.

19) Get sun: The lack of Vitamin D could be a reason for being diagnosed with depression. Most of our current jobs mostly involve spending time inside an office and going home after the sun has set. A lack of sun leads to a Vitamin D deficiency, which in turn, can lower moods and cause depression.

20) Spend time with friends and family: Social relationships are a very important part of mental, emotional and physical well-being. The saying that no man is an island is true. When depressed, the natural tendency is to withdraw from social interactions, and be by oneself. This can make things worse. Reaching out to loved ones, be it friends or family, can be an immediate pick-me-up.

21) Think through the depression: The inability to handle life's daily stresses over a prolonged time can lead to depression. These stresses, which are caused by external sources, are handled by some individuals but some others end up feeling depressed. Other than clinical depression, which needs both medication and psychotherapy, certain forms of depression that's caused by negative thinking can be reversed through using logic. Chronic worrying can lead to depression. Using a process of rational thinking this kind of worry and stress can be reduced thereby curbing depression.

22) Volunteer or be altruistic: Here's a great way to do good and to feel well. Volunteer, give to charity or perform a random act of kindness. According to a study by University of Exeter Medical School, volunteering can decrease depression, and also lead to a longer life. Donating or performing acts of altruism can have similar effects on upping mood and bettering well-being.

23) Follow a creative pursuit: Solving a puzzle, playing video games, learning a musical instrument, painting, gardening or pottery can be a way to have fun and also put a dampener on depression. These creative outlets assist in decoupling feelings of depression and leads to feeling elevated. Go on, pick your favorite hobby or interest sign up for it, and give it whirl.

24) Set goals: When depressed, it's a natural tendency to lose sight of what's important, slack off at work, and have no structure. It therefore becomes important to forcefully set goals and start following up on them. Seek help of family, friends and colleagues to keep you accountable and gently nudge you towards your goals. The brain is wired, to provide a reward every time you hit one of your goals, and this in turn can help fight depression.

25) Forgive and forget: Not forgiving and holding on to past grudges foments anger, resentment, leads to physical ailments; and most importantly, causes depression. This may sound like it is a Bible teaching but it has the underpinning of a deep psychological truth that is backed by science. Forgiveness needs to work three ways: forgiving others for their misdeeds, asking for forgiveness if you have wronged others, and thirdly forgiving yourself.

Caveat: Please consult with a qualified psychiatrist when you feel depressed and also review all the natural alternatives mentioned with them before starting on any. These natural alternatives will work in varying degrees for different people. If you are feeling suicidal, we would suggest you immediately call up a suicide prevention helpline - eg Vandrevalla Foundation Helpline - 1 860 266 2345 (24x7), Aasra - +91 22 2754 6669 (24x7). We can't guarantee response or quality of the interaction.



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