

The Power of Exercise when Fighting Depression

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Most everyone has experienced depressive type symptoms in their life span and may or may not have been diagnosed with depression. Depression affects millions of people around the globe, whether mild or severe.

Characteristics of depression include:

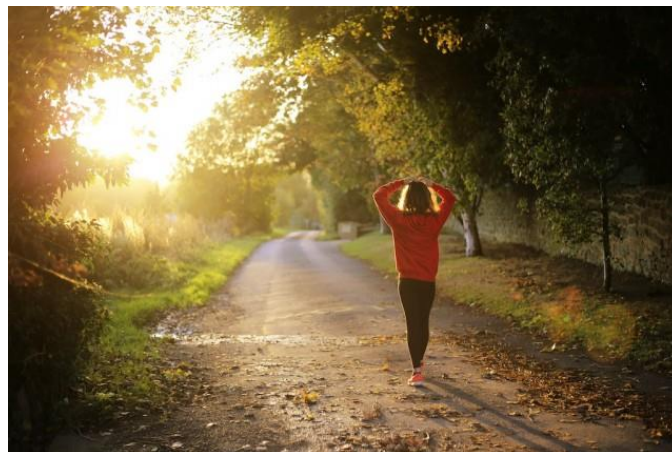
- Fatigue
- Lack of energy
- Loss of interest in normal activities
- Sleep disturbances such as insomnia or excessive sleeping
- Feelings of sadness, tearfulness, worthlessness, or guilt

The World Health Organization has stated that depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide.

While depression is usually treated with antidepressants and/or psychological therapy, such treatments are not always effective and often cause various side effects. **Exercise is a powerful alternative medicine for many common mental health challenges.**

There are a variety of benefits that include:

- Feeling more energetic throughout the day
- Better sleep
- Sharper memories
- More relaxed and positive outlook
- Protection against major depression





A study done by the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health found that running for 15 minutes a day or walking an hour reduces the risk of major depression by 26%.

Exercise is a powerful depression fighter for several reasons. Most importantly, it promotes all kinds of changes in the brain, including neural growth, reduced inflammation, and new activity patterns that promote feelings of calm and well-being. Exercise can also serve as a distraction to break out of the cycle of negative thoughts that feed depression.

You can reap all the physical and mental health benefits of exercise with 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times per week, but a gradual build up to that is better than nothing, try starting with 5 minutes a day and build from there.

Physical activity can make you feel better and will benefit people of all ages who have depression. **Exercise does not have to be strenuous to help ease depression.** Any type of activity is likely to boost your mood and increase your energy level. Go for that walk around the block, join a yoga class or visit the local pool. The likelihood is that any activity you enjoy will make you feel better.

If you or someone you know suffers from depression, it is important to plan an exercise program that will work.

- Always seek advice from a certified fitness professional
- Add variety in your exercise routine to prevent boredom
- Set achievable goals
- Log your progress
- Have a strong support of a group or partner helps maintain motivation.

I often recommend clients to start with five minutes sessions and slowly increase the time. The more you exercise, the more energy you will have. **The key is commitment to some moderate physical activity, most days.**

Exercise is a viable strategy to combat depression as a stand-alone therapy or in conjunction with medication in instances of clinical depression or severe mental health challenges.

If you are interested in finding out more about Health & Wellness Coaches, and what they can assist you with, check out our sister site at - <https://12weekstowellness.com/>