

Things You Can Do to Help Yourself through Depression

Note: This list may feel overwhelming at first. Simply pick one or two things that appeal to you, and start there. Many of these suggestions have been scientifically proven to help over time.

Physically:

- See a physician who will take the time to listen to you
- Talk with your physician about the pros and cons of anti-depressants
- Exercise 3 times a week; outdoor walking or cycling is especially helpful
- Eat a healthy, low-sugar, low-caffeine diet
- Eliminate or reduce soft-drinks, cigarettes and alcohol
- Take a multi-vitamin daily
- Calm yourself before bedtime (read, take a bath, listen to music, etc.)
- Go to bed at the same time each night and get up after 8 hours sleep
- For women, chart your monthly cycle along with your level of depression

Mentally:

- Learn something new (calligraphy, sudoku, snorkeling, etc.)
- Memorize short passages of Scripture or poems you enjoy
- Become aware of and refuse negative self-talk going on in your head
- Talk with a counselor about the sources of your depression
- Read a book on overcoming depression (Depression, A Stubborn Darkness, by Ed Welch)
- Spend 15 quiet minutes each day praying or meditating on the *good* things in your life

Emotionally:

- Examine the ways you have isolated yourself
- Plan a regular activity with someone else
- Get out of the house for some reason every day
- Call a friend at least once a week
- If you keep an emotive journal or diary, consider whether that is helping or hurting
- Join a small group of some kind (book club, Bible study, support group, exercise class)
- If you can reasonably care for one, consider getting a pet
- Find something that makes you laugh (a movie, a blog, a person), and indulge regularly
- Make a list of things which raise your mood and keep it handy
- Listen to upbeat music, especially when you are feeling down

Circumstantially:

- Change one thing for the better in your daily routine
- Keep regular, healthy hours, especially for sleeping and eating
- Find a way to help someone else; volunteer
- Attend church weekly
- Eliminate or reduce unnecessary negative influences and stressors
- Where practical and appealing, talk with a trusted friend about making major changes, such as your job or living situation