Try These 7 Natural Ways to Help Depression

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7 Natural Ways to Help Depression

Talk therapy and medication can treat and manage depression, but they are not your only treatment options – there are natural ways to help your depression too!

Many natural treatment options for depression may include changing your lifestyle and habits, adding new options to your diet, and performing depression-relieving exercises. You don't need to implement these all today, take it one step at a time and find a routine that works for you.

Now, let's get started – here are seven natural ways to help depression today.

1. Eating Healthy

Eating healthy is not just good for your physical health, but it is also important for your mental well-being.

Several studies have found a connection with poor diets and depression. People with diets high in processed meats, fried foods, high-fat dairy, sugars, and desserts are more likely to report depressive symptoms.

Therefore, it is important to avoid these bad foods and eat a diet rich in good foods, including fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean meats, fish, and poultry to keep your energy levels high and your body and mind healthy.

2. Being Active

Depression can destroy your motivation and exercise may be the last thing on your mind. However, research shows being active can improve your mood.

The link between exercise and depression isn’t clear, but researchers can confirm physical activity can make you feel better and lessen depression symptoms. It is also possible that exercise can keep depressive symptoms from returning.

3. Sleeping Well

The sleep-depression connection is complicated. Depression may cause sleep problems and sleep problems may cause or worsen depression.

Sleep problems are often associated with major and clinical depression. And researchers have confirmed people with insomnia have a ten times greater risk of developing depression than those who sleep well.

People who are depressed may also suffer from difficulty falling asleep or staying asleep, unrefreshed sleep and daytime sleepiness.

Try the following to avoid sleep problems and get refreshing and better-quality sleep:

- Stick to a regular sleep schedule where you go to bed at the same time every night and wake up at the same time every morning.
- Avoid vigorous activity before bedtime. Instead, try more relaxing exercise, such as yoga.
- Get plenty of natural sunlight during the day.
- Take a warm bath or shower before bedtime.
- Practice relaxation breathing to help you sleep.
- Make sure your sleep environment is relaxing, pleasant and comfortable.
- Turn off your cellular device and keep other electronics out of your bedroom.
- Try a natural sleep supplement, such as melatonin or a calming tea, like chamomile tea.

4. Vitamins and Supplements

A number of vitamins and supplements have been shown to boost mood and improve symptoms of depression.

B Vitamins

The B vitamins, specifically B6 and folic, are helpful in managing mild depression. They also increase the effectiveness of prescription anti-depressants.

Up to 38% of people who are depressed also have low folate levels, this according to a 2011 report in the medical journal, *Nutrition Journal*. Low levels of vitamin B12 are also linked to depression, according to the Mayo Clinic.

St. John's Wort

St. John's wort has long been used for treating mood disorders. It should, however, be used with caution and under the advice of your doctor.

Some research indicates St. John's wort may help some types of depression similarly to prescription antidepressants. It should not be combined with certain antidepressants as it has been known to cause high levels of serotonin.

SAMe (S-adenosyl-L-methionine)

SAMe is a naturally occurring chemical found throughout our bodies and, as a supplement, it has been extensively used as an antidepressant.

In 2010, researchers from Harvard Medical School and Massachusetts General Hospital looked at 73 depressed patients who had not previously responded to antidepressants. After six weeks, 36% of the study participants who used SAMe showed improvement, compared to 18% of the placebo.

Further, 26% of the SAMe group had complete symptom remission, compared to only 12% of the placebo group.

Fish Oil

Studies have shown omega-3 fatty acids found in fish oil can help promote a healthy mood. This is because people with depression may have low blood levels of certain chemicals found in fish oil.

5. Acupuncture

Western medicine suggests acupuncture needles may help to release natural painkillers in the brain. Traditional Chinese practice believes the process improves function because energy blocks and imbalances throughout the body are corrected.

Regardless of the reasoning as to how and why acupuncture works, it becomes a viable option for treating depression. In fact, research shows it may be just as effective as antidepressants.

One study reported in the *Journal of Alternative and Complementary Medicine* finds that electroacupuncture – while a mild current is sent through needles – was just as effective as Prozac in reducing symptoms of depression.

6. Chiropractic Care

Chiropractic care may help resolve tension headaches, back pain and neck stiffness, all issues that contribute to depression. Because the neck and spine are the nerve pathways of the body, aligning them can bring about balance throughout the entire body.

7. Yoga

Researchers from Boston University School of Medicine have published a report that shows people suffering from major depression who participate in yoga and deep breathing at least twice a week can experience a significant decrease in depression symptoms.

While the Boston University study focused on only one type of yoga, all types of yoga have psychological benefits . Moreover, yoga allows you to avoid medication side effects and drug interactions.

In Conclusion...

There are numerous natural ways to help your depression out there including coping skills, creative therapies, and ways to depression-proof your home. You can also ask others who are living with depression how they manage and treat their depression to get more ideas or how you can start.