What Happens to Your Energy Levels When You Have Depression?

by JO JACKSON

The Relationship Between Depression and Energy Levels

When you have depression, your energy plummets. Levels of the hormones dopamine and serotine decline in the brain causing your mood to drop. The desire to take care of yourself diminishes and you no longer seem to have the energy needed to increase your well-being. It becomes a vicious circle. You have no energy to do the things needed to help your tiredness and aid recovery.

What Causes Low Energy in People With Depression?

Low energy levels in people with depression can be caused by a variety of reasons. It could be that you are not sleeping well, either too little or too much. You may be eating junk food because you have no desire to cook healthy food. You may be smoking or drinking more to cope. Depression can leave you feeling isolated and withdrawn so you no longer exercise. Even the medication to treat depression can deplete your energy.

5 Ways to Improve Depression and Energy Levels

Here are five ways to improve depression and energy levels. They have all been tried and tested by me, and I can assure you that even if they seem difficult, they are all achievable and will make you feel so much better in time.

1. Medication

If you have been feeling depressed or suffering from long-term lethargy, your first point of call should always be to your doctor. You need to rule out any other conditions that may have depleted your energy levels.

If you are already taking medication, it may be a simple case of adjusting the dosage levels or changing to a different type of drug. Sometimes taking antidepressants at a different time of day may give you a better night's sleep which will, in turn, improve your daytime energy. Please only do this after discussing with your doctor or pharmacist.

2. Get Up and Get Dressed

One of the hardest things to do when you are feeling depressed is to get up in the morning. You feel like you just want to stay under your duvet where you feel safe. You don't want to face anyone and may not even see the point in getting up.

It's fine to have the occasional duvet day to rest your mind and your body, but after a couple of days, you need to get up and get moving. Staying in bed will make you feel even more lethargic and less likely to want to get up in future.

If you are in employment or have a family to get ready for school and work, then you will likely be getting up at a

regular time. But if you aren't, then set an alarm for a reasonable time such as 7:00 a.m. or 7:30 a.m. Allow a five-minute snooze on the alarm and then get up. Do not have more than one snooze.

A shower is a great way to wake yourself and refresh your body, especially if you have an energizing citrus shower gel or soap. Wash or wet down your hair under the shower spray. Then give your teeth a good clean, preferably with an electric toothbrush and floss. It is surprising the difference having a really clean, fresh mouth can have.

Chose comfortable clothes or something that makes you feel good. It is very important that you don't put your nightclothes back on, you need to separate day and night.

You may find that completing this morning ritual exhausts you, but you are getting your body moving and it will in time give you the energy to get through the day.

3. Healthy Diet

We all know the importance of a healthy, balanced diet for maintaining normal health and energy levels, but when you are suffering from mental illness that can be a difficult task. Of course, if you don't eat properly, you won't have any energy to recover. Your body needs fuel and nutrients.

Eat smaller portions, little and often. If nothing appeals to your taste buds, try some of your favorite foods from childhood. Eating foods from a time when you felt well and safe may trick the mind into kickstarting your appetite.

If you don't have the energy to prepare meals, ask for help from a loved one or prepare food and drinks for the entire day first thing in the morning when you don't feel so tired. When you start eating properly your energy levels will rise and enable your body to start healing.

4. Exercise

When you are feeling depressed and have no energy, the last thing you want to do is exercise. It doesn't mean you have to run a marathon. Even gentle exercise will encourage blood and oxygen to the brain thus aiding mental health. Of course, endorphins are released which are well-known mood enhancers.

Tai chi and qi gong are calming and focus on breathing too, which is great for people with depression. Yoga and Pilates do too and will build strength and stretch out muscles that may have tightened up through inactivity. Or activities like Tae-Bo or Zumba are fabulous for getting the heart pumping and raising energy levels. Of course, walking or running will have the added benefit of getting you out in the fresh air.

Build up gradually if the thought of exercise scares you. There are some great free 10-minute videos online that you can try. Maybe try something different each day until you find something that resonates with you.

5. Rest

Seemingly small tasks may exhaust you, and it is important to rest too, so take a little time out to listen to some music, read a book or watch some TV for 15 to 30 minutes. Even have a little nap to restore energy levels before completing your next task of the day.

It's important not to go back to bed though, just rest in a chair. You need to separate sleep from rest.

In Conclusion

I hope that by trying some or all of the above you will find that your depression and energy levels improve greatly.