



Constructing a Healthier Industry

Information Partner



keeping active

When people become depressed, they often have no energy or motivation. As a result, they become less active. Doing regular, physical exercise helps to relieve mental and muscular tension. Physical exercise, such as walking, swimming, dancing, playing golf or going to the gym, is helpful.

PLANNING ACTIVITIES

It's a good idea to have a plan to make sure you get around to doing the activities that make you feel better, physically and mentally. If you stick to the plan, not only will you continue to do the things you enjoy, but you'll have a sense of achievement. There's also the added benefit of maintaining social contact with people.



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Think about your activities over the past two weeks.

Have you:

- Avoided the tasks that give you a sense of achievement?
- Avoided friends and family?
- Done fewer things that you normally enjoy doing?
- Stopped regular exercise?

If you answered **YES** to one or more of these questions, the information in this fact sheet may help you become more active.

INCREASE DAILY ACTIVITIES

People with severe depression may have difficulty with even simple things, such as getting up and getting dressed in the morning. Generally, the less you do, the worse you feel. Therefore, it's important to increase your activity level by planning simple daily activities such as shopping, driving, gardening, writing letters or completing simple domestic tasks. When you don't feel like doing much, plan to do things with other people. Joining in activities with others will improve your motivation. Here's a way to start planning your activities.

1. Create a schedule that lists the activities you plan to do each day.
2. Start by writing in your regular activities, like showering, eating breakfast and lunch. Then try to fill in the gaps.
3. Include at least one activity you enjoy each day and one activity that will give you a sense of achievement.
4. Schedule some physical activity for each morning and/or late afternoon.
5. Don't get upset if you can't stick to your plan, but try to stick to it as closely as possible. If an activity runs overtime or cannot be completed, skip it and move onto the next one at the appointed time.

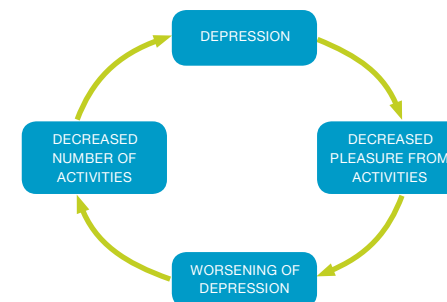
INCREASE ACTIVITIES YOU ENJOY

- People with depression lose interest and pleasure in things they once enjoyed. You may even find that you've stopped some of these activities. This loss of pleasure and enjoyment in life then makes you feel worse.
- Plan activities you'd find enjoyable, interesting, relaxing or satisfying. For example, reading, listening to music, watching movies, gardening, going to the beach or park, taking part in sporting or creative activities, shopping, seeing friends or playing with pets.
- These activities are important in overcoming your depression. At first you may not find them as enjoyable as before but, if you persist, the pleasure will eventually return.

INCREASE SOCIAL ACTIVITIES

- People with depression often withdraw from their family and close friends.
- As a result, they usually have less opportunity to feel connected. A cycle of increasing social isolation then develops.
- It's very important to continue to participate in activities with family and close friends and to accept social invitations, even though you may not feel like it.
- People who are more socially isolated have an increased risk of developing depression and take longer to recover.

The depression cycle



TIPS TO SUCCESSFULLY PLAN ACTIVITIES

- The cycle of depression can be broken by doing things you enjoy.
- Create your schedule in the evening for the following day's activities, so you'll have a plan from the moment you open your eyes.
- If necessary, ask someone to help you create your activity plan.
- If you have difficulty getting out of bed in the morning, make plans to meet someone mid-morning. This makes you get up and get moving.
- Include exercise in your activity plan. Physical exercise can help reduce depression.

A LIST OF ENJOYABLE ACTIVITIES

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|--|--------------------------------------|------------------|
| Keeping fit | | | |
| o Go for a 20 minute walk | o Surf | o Walk the dog | o Play golf |
| o Ride a bike | o Bushwalk | o Go to the gym | o Play netball |
| o Join an aerobics class | o Swim at a pool/beach | o Kick a ball | o Jog |
| o Play squash or tennis | | | |
| Entertain yourself | | | |
| o Read the newspaper | o Watch TV | o Read a book/magazine | o Write a letter |
| o Surf the internet | o Play a solo card game | o Do a crossword | |
| Socialise | | | |
| o Invite a friend around for coffee | o Organise a video evening | o Visit a neighbour | |
| o Ring a friend for a chat | o Take your children to the playground | | |
| Indulge yourself | | | |
| o Have a massage | o Paint your nails | o Go for a hike with your friends | |
| o Buy some new clothes | o Eat some exotic fruit/chocolate | o Have a bubble bath | |
| o Buy some flowers | o Lie on the beach and read a book | | |
| Around the house | | | |
| o Cook something new | o Listen to a CD/ radio | o Watch TV | o Knit/Sew |
| o Fix something in the house | o Handicrafts | o Do some gardening | |
| o Play with your children or pets | | | |
| Away from home | | | |
| o Go to a market | o Visit a museum | o Visit an art gallery | |
| o Visit a friend or family member | o Visit the library | o Check out the local neighbourhood | |
| o Take your children to a park | o Go to a movie | o Stroll through the shopping centre | |
| Plan ahead | | | |
| o Organise a dinner party | o Plan a BBQ | o Plan a weekend away | o Join a club |
| o Buy theatre or sporting tickets | o Do some Christmas shopping | o Invite some friends to see a movie | |

WORKSHEET FOR PLANNING ACTIVITIES AND MANAGING YOUR SLEEP-WAKE CYCLE

| | Day 1 | Day 2 | Day 3 | Day 4 | Day 5 | Day 6 | Day 7 |
|--|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| MORNING | | | | | | | |
| 7am | | | | | | | |
| 8am | | | | | | | |
| 9am | | | | | | | |
| 10am | | | | | | | |
| 11am | | | | | | | |
| 12noon | | | | | | | |
| AFTERNOON | | | | | | | |
| 1pm | | | | | | | |
| 2pm | | | | | | | |
| 3pm | | | | | | | |
| 4pm | | | | | | | |
| 5pm | | | | | | | |
| 6pm | | | | | | | |
| EVENING | | | | | | | |
| 7pm | | | | | | | |
| 8pm | | | | | | | |
| 9pm | | | | | | | |
| 10pm | | | | | | | |
| Time of going to bed | | | | | | | |
| Number of hours asleep | | | | | | | |
| Rate your sleep quality on a scale of 0-5 (0=bad, 5=excellent) | | | | | | | |
| Rate your mood today on a scale of 0-5 (0=bad, 5=excellent) | | | | | | | |
| Rate how tired you are today on a scale of 0-5 (0=very tired, 5=energetic) | | | | | | | |

The OzHelp Foundation

1300 OZHELP (1300 694 357)

www.ozhelp.org.au

BeyondBlue

For information about depression, anxiety and related drug and alcohol problems visit

www.beyondblue.org.au or call the *beyondblue: the national depression initiative* info line on

1300 22 4636

