

# DEPRESSION & EXERCISE...

blurt

When it's a struggle to get out of bed, the very thought of exercising seems impossible. Exercise is simply the last thing you feel like doing. You're probably reading this and feeling slightly annoyed that we are even suggesting it.

Bear with us....

## WHY EXERCISE IS IMPORTANT...

When we exercise, our bodies release endorphins which trigger a positive feeling in your body and act as sedatives.

The benefits of exercise are instant - a 5 or 10 minute walk will trigger endorphins but even better, regular exercise has been shown to:

Boost self-esteem ✨ build confidence ✨ improve sleep  
sense of achievement ✨ reduce feelings of anxiety  
reduce symptoms of depression ✨ reduce body fat  
reduce stress ✨ increase energy ✨ tone muscles  
build strength ✨ lower blood pressure ✨ strengthen  
bones ✨ keeps your heart healthy ✨ reduce risk of  
stroke and diabetes ✨ less anger ✨ more focus ✨ reduce  
isolation ✨ provide a distraction ✨ lift your mood  
trigger new cell growth in the brain ✨ relieve muscle  
tension.

## GET MOVING...

Ideally, we'd all exercise moderately (until you're breathing a bit heavier than usual but aren't out of breath, your heart rate rises and you begin to break a sweat but should still be able to talk) for 30 minutes, five times a week.

30 minutes might seem like a big step from doing nothing but you can break it down into 3 lots of 10 minutes or 2 lots of 15 minutes to make it more manageable. A 10 minute walk can improve your mood for up to 2 hours.

Often, thinking about exercise is worse than doing it. When you're sat all snuggled and warm, there doesn't seem any point in getting dressed to go out for a brisk walk. Many people find that getting dressed to go out and exercise is the biggest step. Once ready, the rest seems easy (or at least easier).

If you are anxious about exercising alone or leaving the house, consider walking up and down the stairs or an exercise video until you feel ready to face your anxieties. Roping in a friend to exercise with you might make it more fun, provide social support and reduce the feeling of isolation.

Different exercise appeals to different people and whilst a moderate to high intensity work out will release lots of feel-good endorphins, a lower intensity exercise such as yoga may help you relax. The important point to remember is don't overdo it! Doing too much can have a detrimental effect.

Exercise doesn't mean you need to spend lots of money on special clothing or gym memberships, walking costs nothing and if you opt to walk instead of taking a bus, it could even save you money.

The following info sheets are also available in the series:

-  · Depression
-  · Anxiety
-  · Stress
-  · Depression & Sleep
-  · Depression & Nutrition
-  · Depression & Money
-  · Depression & Work
-  · Depression for Employers
-  · Supporting someone with depression
-  · PND (Postnatal Depression)
-  · PTSD (Post Traumatic Stress Disorder)