

What To Do When You Are Getting Depressed

These are some simple ways to help yourself alleviate symptoms while you're waiting for other help, or trying to keep things on an even keel. They may not solve the underlying problem, but they will provide some relief.

- Get help while you still can: the longer you wait, the harder it gets. Depression is very dangerous. Medications may take from four to six weeks to work.
- Use cognitive therapy techniques to get you out of negative thought patterns (read self-help books: refer to Resource List).
- Plan your day with some activities you have to do and some activities you enjoy. Rate your expectations of these activities, and then reassess how you felt after their completion.
- Break down difficult tasks into smaller incremental parts.
- Give yourself credit for even the smallest things you get done.
- Remember that depression passes. Focus on living one day at a time.
- Get emotional support from a family member, friend, or mental health professional. Get involved in a fun activity with someone you enjoy. Cuddle with your mate. Spend some time with your pet.
- Talk to an understanding, nonjudgmental person for as long as you need to talk (or several people might take turns talking with you). It needs to be okay to talk about anything and to be emotional.
- Listen to or help someone else.
- Use whatever spiritual resources you are comfortable calling on.
- Get some exercise, whatever you can muster—walk, run, bike, swim, etc.
- Get out in the sunlight as much as possible. If you must be inside, sit or work near a window.
- Use full spectrum lighting indoors (read the chapter in this book on full spectrum lighting). Avoid areas lit with conventional fluorescent lights.
- Eliminate sugar, caffeine, and junk food from your diet. Eat three healthy meals a day.
- Buy yourself something you have been wanting and would enjoy.
- Read a funny or light book or watch a funny video. Listen to music that you enjoy.
- Get dressed, putting on something that makes you feel good.
- Take a long, hot bath.