

Top 10 Daily Habits To Keep Depression Away

By [Kathryn Goetzke](#)

~ 2 min read



There are certain things that, done regularly, help keep my depression symptoms at bay. Some are very familiar while others are not always at the forefront of our thoughts, but can make all the difference in my mental health.

While not every habit may be helpful for you in fighting back your depression, I've found that if I do the following 10 things daily, I can generally keep my downs from spiraling out of control:

1. **Journaling.** Writing is a great way to release emotions. It is unfiltered thought, where you can speak your mind without editing. No judgments, criticisms or condemnations from others. It allows you to explore emotions on a level that you may not necessarily always consider when thinking, but somehow come to you as you put a pen to paper.
2. **Adequate sleep with short nap if needed.** Sleeping is when our body recovers. Our immune system repairs itself, our brains rest and grow, and we store energy for the next day. Yet we are constantly overworking ourselves, putting ourselves in stressful situations, and not getting enough sleep. We often overeat when we are tired and grumpy, which makes for a much harder life.
3. **Exercise.** Exercise produces natural endorphins, which help put us in a good mood. There is a lot of research that shows that [exercise improves mood](#). Your ability to learn also improves immediately following exercise. John Ratey has done fascinating research on children and exercise, so if you don't know much about it read his work.

<http://psychcentral.com/lib/top-10-daily-habits-to-keep-depression-away/>

4. **Drink plenty of water.** Dehydration is often overlooked, but our body is made up of 95 percent water. When it does not have enough we often feel lethargic, grumpy, and get headaches. We also tend to mistake hunger for thirst, so before getting that bag of chips out drink a glass or two of water. Soda, lemonade or flavored drinks do not count as water.
5. **Getting enough Vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids.** Vitamin D and omega-3 fatty acids are specific nutrients that help the brain, yet often we do not get enough of either through our diets alone. We also now use sunscreen which we did not use in the old days, blocking out our skin's absorption of Vitamin D from the sun.
6. **Being social.** It is easy to be a hermit these days, as you can do everything via Internet. People increasingly telecommute and so are spending less time outside the home. Even an hour a day with someone else can boost your mood.
7. **Meditation or prayer.** Most people think of prayer as religious, but it does not have to be. If you hold on to all of your problems, it can easily get overwhelming and trigger into a hopelessness that spirals out of control. So take some time to let things go, think good thoughts about others, and bring your mind to a peaceful place.
8. **Giving thanks.** Three thank-yous a day. Every day. Every single person in this world has something to **be thankful** about every day, no matter how dire their situation. When we focus on the positive, it helps bring more positive into our life. Even when times are bad, it is important to remember the good.
9. **Eating fruits and vegetables.** What we eat nourishes our body, including our brain. If we eat well our brain feels it, just as it does when we drink a lot of coffee and consume a lot of sugar. There are so many farmers' markets now, and people selling locally-grown food through through co-ops, that getting fresh fruit and veggies should not be hard to do.
10. **Practice unconditional love.** This may be the hardest thing. As we get caught up in our daily routine, being kind and showing unconditional love becomes harder and harder. Traffic, the late babysitter, and unhappy kids are just a few of many daily life challenges. Yet if we think about unconditional love every single day, we in turn will be more loving, caring people and attract more of the same into our lives

This is not going to keep you depression-free by any means, but they are some core practices that go a long way toward keeping depression at bay even through the most trying times. If you think you don't have time for all this, notice how much time it wastes to fight with others and be unproductive. Developing good habits is crucial to developing — and maintaining — healthy minds.



Last reviewed: By John M. Grohol, Psy.D. on 30 Jan 2013
Published on PsychCentral.com. All rights reserved.

<http://psychcentral.com/lib/top-10-daily-habits-to-keep-depression-away/>