

Exercise and depression



Key points to remember:

- Exercise can improve your mental health
- Exercise increases serotonin and endorphin levels in the brain
- Exercise does not need to be extremely vigorous – even a brisk walk every day can be beneficial

Exercise has many benefits, not only for your physical health but also your mental health. Research indicates that regular exercise releases chemicals like endorphins and serotonin that have been shown to improve your mood.

How can regular exercise assist in the treatment of depression?

- Increase your energy levels
- Improve your sleep
- Provide a distraction from your thoughts and worries
- Improve concentration and memory
- Reduce feelings of loneliness and isolation

How much exercise do you need?

Australian guidelines recommend adults do at least 30 minutes of moderate intensity physical activity on most or all days of the week (e.g. a brisk walking that slightly increases your breathing and heart rate)

You can make up 30 minutes over the day by combining shorter 10 to 15 minute sessions.

Practising mindfulness while doing exercise also reduces your stress and improves your mental health. Try to be active in as many ways as possible each day (e.g. using the stairs instead of a lift).

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