

Fuck

DEPRESSION

A Collection Of Scientifically Proven Ways To Get Through Shit

Fuck DEPRESSION



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A few years ago, without any warning, I hit a long bout of depression.

I didn't want to seem weak or be a burden to my friends, so I didn't ask for help; it seemed easier to pretend that everything was OK. I continued to post on social media about how great life was, while avoiding gatherings and slowly pushing everyone away.

I'd never experienced anything remotely close to the isolation, joylessness, lack of motivation, and the sense of worthlessness that depression brought. It dragged me away from everything I loved, leaving me broken, unemployed, homeless, and alone.

In that loneliness, I wished that someone was there to help, but no-one was - I had told them to go. So I drifted aimlessly until I hit rock bottom.

There, in my darkest hours, I realised that no-one could ever hurt me as much as my own mind and that I, alone, could beat this. I wrote a list of things I needed to fix and started crossing them off, finding happiness in the progress and saving myself.

Years have passed since that horrible period and I now have an amazing job, financial security, happiness, and, most importantly, am surrounded by great friends and family who forgave me for the stupid shit I said and did.

However, despite these improvements, I do have one regret about that period of my life: I wish I'd asked for help. I could've received advice from people who'd been in my position, or had experience dealing with depression, which would have helped me get out of my situation far faster.

So, to offer the kind of help I wish I'd sought, I've put together a collection of all the things I continue to do that have helped me get through life.

Doing any of these things just once won't change your life - like how going for a single run won't make you fit - so if you're serious about sorting your shit, then you need to commit to making changes. It isn't easy but it's worth it.

It's strange thinking back to how hard the struggle with depression was, as beating it has led to richer, happier life. Ironically, the habits that depression pushed me towards, not only helped me to beat it but, led to a more fulfilling life. I hope these habits can do the same for you.

- Jack

Have a Reality Check

You're broken, just like everyone else and that's fine

In short:

Depression can affect anyone no matter the age, gender or race. Over 300 million people worldwide suffer from depression and one in four people, globally, will be affected by common mental health issues (including depression, bipolar disorder, and/or anxiety disorder). In the midst of major depression, you may feel hopeless and helpless. But the reality is, this condition is highly treatable. There is now a range of cutting-edge treatments that can help (so if one approach doesn't work there are other, effective, methods to try). With so many people affected, it's time to stop being scared and admit that you're burdened and start the healing process.

In-depth:

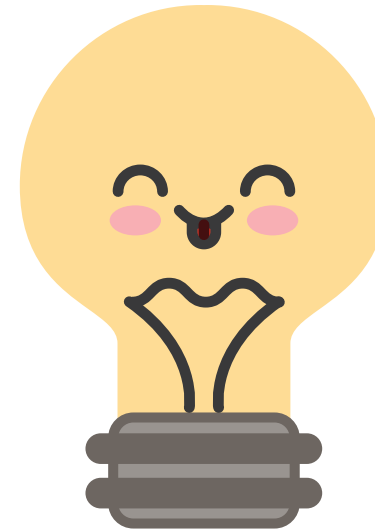
Mental illness is one of the most common treatable illnesses in the world with a quarter of all people affected by mental health issues at some point in their lives. It may be an isolating illness but, as you can see from those numbers, you're not alone - not in the slightest.

It seems like a fucked statistic because, with so many affected, you'd think humans would have evolved out of it. But with the earliest recorded incidences of depression written over 3000 years ago there isn't much chance of it just going away, because we've been dealing with this shit for quite a while.

Thankfully humans have developed a number of tools to deal with it (which is the purpose of this book). However, you need to know that not every tool will work for every person. Persistence, and trying numerous approaches, is the key to getting better. Some people respond really well to therapy, others respond better to medication and others feel better after going for a run - all of our brains are wired differently, which is why there is no easy cure. You may need to try a few different methods before you discover the combination that works for you but don't give up - you will find it.

The first step in this journey of recovery is to admit that something is wrong - to say it out loud. It's time to stop pretending everything is OK. Stop posting bullshit 'inspirational' quotes on social media (for everyone's benefit) and let's get this shit sorted.

Things are going to get better from here.



Tips to fix your shit:

- Externalise the fact that you have depression, say it out loud or even write it down. Accepting that you have a passing illness is the first step in getting better.
- Find someone that you can trust and tell them about how you're feeling. Think of it like you're a bottle of shaken up soda, talking is like gently twisting the lid and releasing a bit of pressure - you'll feel a lot better.
- Do not give up. If one treatment doesn't work, then there are others worth exploring that could be more effective for your physiology (there is no 'one size fits all' cure for depression). Certain medication, for example, may not work for you but therapy might. All options are worth exploring!

Set Some Goals

Make a list and smash through it like a legend

In short:

Creating an action plan of short term goals can help you to deal with a lot of, seemingly, overwhelming issues.

In-depth:

Depression makes you a little bit shitter at everything. It can significantly impair your attention span, information processing ability, memory, decision-making skills and also significantly impact on your ability to complete tasks.

To counter this, make a list of your big goals or your ideal situation and work your way back from there. There's an analogy "how do you eat an elephant? One bite at a time" which is pretty appropriate. It might be a shit analogy but there's a pretty obvious message - you can't take on a big goal at once, you have to divide it into smaller goals.

Say your goal is to run a marathon - instead of trying to run as far as you can on the first day, take it day by day. And map that out. Hell, on your first day you may just walk around the block but that's a start and each small step can grow into a larger one. Eventually you'll smash through your goals like a fucking champ and then you can flip the old you the bird.

This whole 'every journey starts with a single step' motivational shit might help you to get started but you need to know that someday you're going to be a useless piece of shit and not achieve everything you wanted. If that happens, don't be too hard on yourself (but also don't be a little bitch and not make any effort). You do have a passing illness and if you were physically ill, with a cold or man-flu, would you force yourself to do things that you were too sick to do?

Of course you wouldn't.

You need to be realistic about what you can accomplish and push yourself to do small things that you can reward yourself for (possibly not with ice cream if your goal is to lose weight). So, set small goals to work towards a big one, focus on what you can do now and push yourself a little harder.

Side note: not all goals need to be an effort to accomplish big things, sometimes a goal should just be to spend some time on yourself, without applying pressure.



Tips to fix your shit:

- Write down a long term goal and then break it down into smaller steps, so it becomes manageable - with every small step getting you closer to the objective.
- Talk to someone who has a similar goal or has achieved what you want to achieve. For instance, if your goal is to become a manager in your workplace - approach a manager you like and ask them to tell you about how they got to that position. People love talking about themselves, so they're more than happy to share stories.
- Never give in to the urge to do nothing entirely.
- Make sure that you set aside time to relax when you're setting goals. When you exercise heavily your body needs 'recovery days', your mind is the same.

Fixing Financial Fears

Money matters, mo' fucker

In short:

People under financial pressure are three times more likely to develop mental health issues like depression and anxiety. The compounding nature of debt can be massively overwhelming but it needs to be addressed quickly to avoid more issues.

In-depth:

Money problems can be a downward spiral. If you're already suffering from depression you may not be able to manage bill payments well, or could even spend uncontrollably to make up for feeling down (just like comfort eating, we can comfort spend). This can also have a flow on effect, with debt causing feelings of being overwhelmed and helplessness.

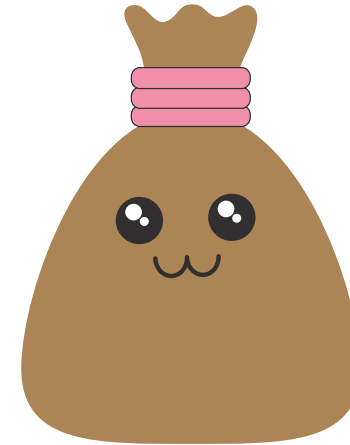
Dealing with money issues is imperative as money troubles can restrict our choices in life and take a huge emotional toll, leading to lower self-esteem and poor physical and mental health. This then leads to a further cycle of not being able to solve problems because you are freaking out. Money problems can be an endless spiral.

There are a few easy-ish approaches to solving basic financial issues – firstly, and most obviously, stop buying shit you don't need to impress people you don't care about.

Secondly, try some free and independent financial advice websites. Numerous websites give you access to valuable resources to help you tackle debt problems, assemble budgets, and work out ways to plan for events that may impact you financially.

Thirdly, if you have fines piling up from government organisations (like speeding or parking tickets,) call them and explain your situation – they're far more reasonable and patient than you'd expect. They can set up a payment arrangement to make payments more manageable, which will stop the mail piling up.

Finally, go and talk to your bank – there is debt consolidation available, in most cases, to pull together all of your higher purchases, fines, outgoings etc... into a single manageable payment - which makes life far easier.



Tips to fix your shit:

- Get independent financial advice from a website like Sorted.co.nz.
- Look at the last three months of bank statements and make a budget based around that - then tighten it up by cutting out all the things you don't need (wants and needs are two very different things)
- Make a saving goal to reward yourself (like a trip overseas or a new handbag, or a trip overseas to buy a new handbag - it's your money)
- Keep a record of every single dollar you spend, it could be on your phone or in a notepad, and you'll quickly realise where your money is going.
- Talk to your bank about options for debt consolidation.
- Check out which banks are offering the best deals to take on your debt. There is often deals where one bank will offer a low, or no, interest on credit card debt if you switch to them. So switch to the best deal (it's free to do) and save yourself a tonne of money in interest.

Healthy Diet, Healthy You

Eat yourself to ease

In short:

A poor diet has a fast, and significant, negative impact on moods. It is estimated that around 90 percent of the serotonin in your body is made in the digestive system - so food, and drink, plays an incredibly important part in mental wellbeing. Try to avoid food made of refined carbohydrates (such as white bread and white rice) and those with high levels of sugar and artificial sweeteners. Instead stick to meat, poultry, eggs, seafood, nuts, green leafy vegetables, legumes (such as peas and beans), and whole grains.

In-depth:

Between five and seven litres of blood are pumped around your body and through your brain every minute. So, if you're filling your body with shit food, with poor nutritional value, then it's going to make its way to your brain (and the 100 million brain cells in your stomach) and will fuck with your mood - and that, my friend, is science.

We all know that obesity is a killer but the same food that fattens us up also brings us down. Pizza, for example, may seem perfect but - prepare yourself, the following words are going to hurt - it's not.

There is a direct link between blood sugar balance and moods. To put it really simply, all of the carbohydrates you ingest are broken down and turned into glucose by your stomach. Glucose, which is also known as blood sugar, is important as it is the main source of energy for our bodies.

However, every food affects your blood glucose differently which is what the glycemic index (GI) explains. Foods with high GI - such as high sugar foods as well as white rice, bread and pizza - break down faster during digestion and release glucose faster, causing it to spike.

The more uneven your blood sugar supply is, the more uneven your mood can be. In fact, blood sugar balance is cited as one of the biggest factors in mood disorders.

A recent study found that people who ate a diet of High-GI and processed foods for five years had a 58 percent increase in risk of developing depression. In complete contrast, people who ate whole-foods for the same period of time had a 26 percent reduced risk of depression.



Tips to fix your shit:

- Try to eat a balanced diet with a focus on meat, poultry, eggs, sea food, nuts, green leafy vegetables, legumes (such as peas and beans), and whole grains (that means no junk food)
- Don't skip meals
- Minimise sugar and refined carbs
- Boost your mood with foods rich in Omega-3 fatty acids
- There are a number of supplements that have been shown to help regulate, or boost, mood (that should be taken with meals) including: [Vitamin D3](#), [Vitamin B](#), [Magnesium](#), [Zinc](#), and [Omega-3](#).

Avoid Alcohol and Drugs

Stop getting fucked up to stop being fucked up

In short:

Alcohol, and a number of drugs, are depressants which inhibit brain receptors and can lead to depressive symptoms in users. Excessive consumption can trigger depression and anxiety – which tend to come during withdrawal (hangovers and comedowns) and can last for days.

In-depth:

It should be obvious by now but one of western society's favourite beverages, alcohol, is also incredibly harmful for anyone battling mental illness. Due to its association with 'partying', socialising and relaxing, alcohol is often consumed excessively, with people using it as a tool to escape from depression. Though, in reality it just locks people into depression and makes it even worse.

It's a little ironic that so many people still think so highly of alcohol as, if we're honest, it has a pretty shit return on investment. It costs a lot, the fun part doesn't last long, it makes you fat, can lead to pimples, has been linked to a whole number of cancers, and the hangovers last longer the older you are.

As for drugs, for every high there is a low and almost every narcotic that's smoked, snorted, dropped, rigged or shelved has incredibly detrimental side effects. These can massively affect users on-going mental wellbeing in a number of ways, from withdrawal to sleeplessness to panic attacks or worse.

The corrosive relationship between depression and substance abuse is well established and should never, ever, be explored. We all know that humans like to do dumb shit for thrills (see: base jumping, streaking, letting your conservative parents read your e-book with the word "fuck" in the title) but drug use during depression is gambling with your long-term happiness. Drugs and alcohol are not a long term fix but more of a short term escape which can lead to a worsening state of mind, taking away your ability to fight back.

The logical suggestion is to avoid taking anything that can have potentially negative effects (and clashes with medication), just in case. That way you can invest your time in kicking ass, instead of being a useless hungover fuck who spends three days feeling like shit after a single night out (see: poor return on investment ... and my wasted early twenties).



Tips to fix your shit:

- If you're in a situation where you feel like you need to be drinking to fit in, hold a non-alcoholic drink that looks similar, such as a lemon, lime and bitters or a ginger beer.
- Suggest activities with friends that don't centre around alcohol and drugs, getting out and doing something 'exciting' (not the same thing you do every Friday and Saturday night) will steer people away from intoxicants. For instance, you can't go downhill mountain biking if you're drunk.
- Offer to sober drive your friends to parties/nightclubs (make them give you petrol money so you come away a little richer for putting up with their shit)
- Don't make a big deal about not drinking or doing drugs. People who are fucked up tend to be relatively self-centred so they probably won't notice – unless you bring it up.
- There is some modern research into the anti-depressant nature of a few narcotics but it must be noted that these are tested in labs and are not the shitty drugs you get from a dodgy dealer. The black market has very few concerns about their buyers health or safety of their products. Shitty street drugs are not the same as the ones being tested as medication - so, avoid them when you're depressed. Just because you're down doesn't mean you have to be a dumbass.

Get Some Exercise

Roll your fat ass down the street, like a champ

In short:

Exercise helps people to lose weight and tone up but it also helps manage depression. As little as 10 minutes a day, five days a week, can help but researchers recommend up to an hour of exercise - which can include walking.

In-depth:

There's a great saying: if you're angry go for a run, if you're still angry at the end - then you haven't run far, or hard, enough.

With 14 percent of people who suffer from depression turning to exercise for relief, exercise is quickly becoming one of the best ways to combat depression. Exercise releases endorphins - which help you to feel good - and reduces negative immune system chemicals, aids weight loss, helps you to gain confidence, and clears up skin blemishes. Why do you think that people who do crossfit are so happy and go on about it all the time? It's cause it works (and they're fucks).

Whenever exercise is mentioned as being so beneficial, replies tend to be "I'm too busy for that", the more honest, "I can't be fucked", or the more direct "you can get fucked - I'm not fat".

If it is too hard to find time, then start small and go for a walk during your lunch break - that way you can get a bit of sunlight as well. If you do have a little bit more time and are just being a lazy fuck, force yourself to go out and do even the most minimal exercise (such as walking) because researchers suggest 2.5 - 7.5 hours of exercise a week (just over an hour a day), will have the best results on your mental wellbeing.

If you can't be fucked walking, hate the idea of running, and claim you don't have any spare time - then download the free exercise plan in the link below. The plan is based around effective bodyweight exercise than can be done at home, or in your back yard, with equipment from around the house.

[DOWNLOAD BEGINNER BODY WEIGHT EXERCISE PLAN HERE](#)



Tips to fix your shit:

- Download an exercise plan (use a body weight exercise plan for really effective at-home workouts)
- Print the plan off and make notes on it to show your improvements (they will come hard and fast if you're new to this)
- Remember - your fatigue levels will improve if you stick with exercise
- Pair up with an exercise partner, someone who you can socialise with and will encourage you
- Don't fall for the supplement industries bullshit - 90% of the shit they say is crap, don't let yourself get suckered in by the advert featuring the ripped guy or gal. Hard work got them that body (and probably steroids).

Get More Sunlight

Go outside, you pale fuck

In short:

Sunlight helps our bodies to produce Vitamin D which, amongst other things, regulates serotonin and boosts our immune systems, making us happy and healthy. Spend 10 - 15 minutes a day outside to help elevate your Vitamin D levels or take Vitamin D3 (up to 2,000 IUs a day for adults is recommended) to help boost your levels if you can't get outside. Walking outside in 'nature' for 15 minutes a day also has a significant impact on happiness, decreasing stress, hostility and depression.

In-depth:

Humans aren't designed to spend all day sitting inside offices staring at a computer screen, pretending to work while secretly watching cat videos. And we're especially not designed to go home straight after work to spend all night sitting in front of a screen watching Netflix or jerking off (or both).

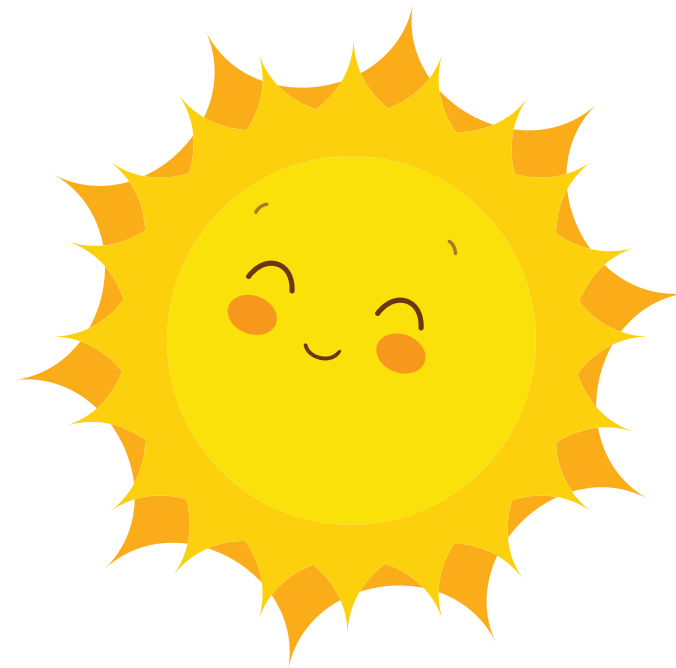
With nearly a billion people worldwide potentially having a Vitamin D deficiency we can all easily make some very small changes to get some pretty huge benefits. Vitamin D is one of the most important things we need to keep us happy. And, fun fact, it isn't even a vitamin - it's a growth hormone. One that is responsible for hundreds of processes within the body including serotonin regulation (which is the shit that makes you feel happy).

Most of our Vitamin D comes from sun exposure, which is great - unless it's raining/snowing/generally shit outside. So, if you can't get outside grab some Vitamin D3 from a pharmacy, or health store, and top it up.

If you do manage to get some spare time and good weather, spending time outdoors can reduce ADHD symptoms significantly in pretty much everyone. That's fantastic if you're the type of person who's been told numerous times by workmates to "stop distracting me ... I'll look at that cat video later".

The other benefit to going outside is that you can see animals in real life and not just in funny videos on the internet.

(Disclaimer: animals tend to be funnier on the internet)



Tips to fix your shit:

- Go for a 15 minute walk outside (you cannot generate Vitamin D sitting behind a window - you just absorb heat)
- Take a Vitamin D3 supplement
- Get frequent short exposure to sunlight (it's more effective and safer than prolonged, intermittent exposure)
- It's almost impossible to meet the minimal Vitamin D requirements from food - so go outside!

Embrace Social Interaction

Hang out with real friends ... in the real world

In short:

Frequent social media use massively increases the possibility of developing depression, anxiety and experiences of social isolation. Limit your attachment to networking sites and apps, and prioritise spending time with real people - in the real world.

In-depth:

Everybody's online persona is a little bit shitter and a lot faker than in reality. We all know someone who takes hundreds of selfies just to get the perfect shot, only to post a single photo online with a bullshit inspirational quote such as, "The best you is the REAL you".

If you've deleted 90+ pictures of yourself, then there's a good chance that final photo isn't the "real you" but you're not alone. We're all playing this same weird narcissistic game of where we act like characters we've created instead of ourselves - and we all feel shit about it.

If you are a high user of social media then you have almost three times the risk of developing depression and anxiety, than people who use it the least - which is, surely, the most millennial way to develop depression.

Social media was conceived as a way to bring people together and communicate in new and exciting ways. But instead networking sites have reduced us to a bunch of socially isolated assholes with a whole range of mental issues, including being addicted to the internet.

Ironically, the longer we spend on these social platforms, the more likely we are to feel alone. A recent study has found more than two hours of social media use a day doubles our chances of experiencing social isolation and those who visit it more than 58 times a week (8.3 times a day) are three times more at risk of feeling isolated than people logging in less than nine times a week.

Meaningful interpersonal relationships are proven to alleviate both depression and feelings of isolation. So contact a friend and book in some time to do something outside, maybe even add in some exercise - like a walk, and try and knock off a heap of these tips at once.



Tips to fix your shit:

- Limit your time on social media by deleting the apps from your phone and creating a barrier for access
- Turn off notifications from social media sites so you're not constantly checking them
- Keep your phone turned face down so you're not tempted to look at it everytime the screen lights up with a notification
- Lock in a lunch or dinner with a friend you haven't seen in a while
- If your friends are busy try taking a class based around a hobby you enjoy or join a club

Surround Yourself with Good People

Not everyone is a fuckwit

In short:

Happiness is contagious and depression, thankfully, is not. Having a circle of friends who have healthy moods can halve the probability of developing depression over a 6-12 month period. Furthermore, having friends with positive moods doubles the probability of recovering from depression over the same period. Creating a network full of positive people can significantly impact on your mental health and help you to navigate through some of life's challenges.

In-depth:

Surrounding yourself with optimistic, ambitious, determined, and passionate people with drive will have dramatic effects on your outlook and your physical health.

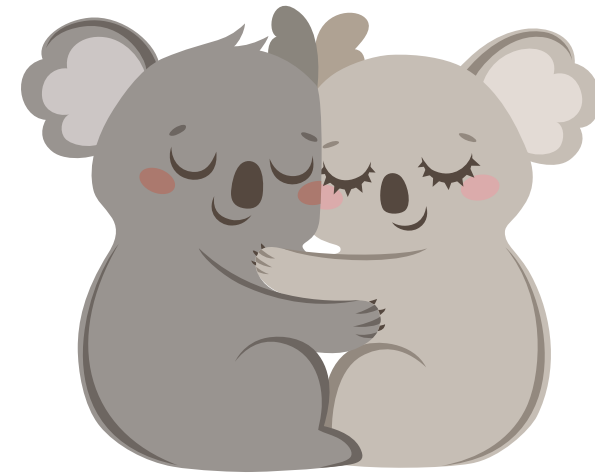
So, if you're truly committed to getting better and passionate about achieving your goals, then you need to surround yourself with like-minded people. If the people you spend time with are lazy and don't want to 'do anything' it will encourage you to slack off as well. It may be unintentional but it's easy to buy into that 'can't be fucked' attitude - especially if it's an attitude shared by your entire circle of friends.

There is a lot of research showing that your friends can greatly influence your decisions and your self-control, so it's important that they're supportive and approachable.

Your friends might be all "YOLO" (do people still say that?) and want to party hard but do they give a fuck about you when you wake up on feeling so down? The best people will.

Aim to spend as much time possible with the people who lift you up, encourage you and support your goals. Every moment of those friendships doesn't have to be relentlessly positive but simply having an atmosphere where you're comfortable to talk about your favourite new movie, song, book, or whatever, without being told you're wrong or teased can help a lot.

There are a lot of good people out there - try to spend time with them.



Tips to fix your shit:

- Pick a friend from your circle of friends who shares a common interest (that may not be shared by the whole group). Ask them to come join you while you do it, hiking for example
- Spend less time with your friends who are negative, unmotivated (ie... just do the same thing every day - cause that's boring as fuck), and directionless. Spend more time with your friends who are positive, enthusiastic and progressing in life.
- Join a website (like MeetUp.com) which acts as a hub for groups. Here you'll be able to find like-minded people who enjoy similar activities. There's groups for everything from sports to arts to geeky pursuits and even people of the same age who want to meet people - it may be daunting to meet new people but you shouldn't let that nervousness hold you back from, potentially, great experiences and relationships.

Improve Your Sleeping Patterns

Do the thing you know you should be doing

In short:

Not getting enough sleep significantly impacts on memory, decision making ability, and the immune system. Deep sleep, where we produce growth hormones, is critical for memory and decision making, and it may disappear with depression. Every person requires different lengths of slumber but the 'general' range for an adult is 7 - 9 hours a night.

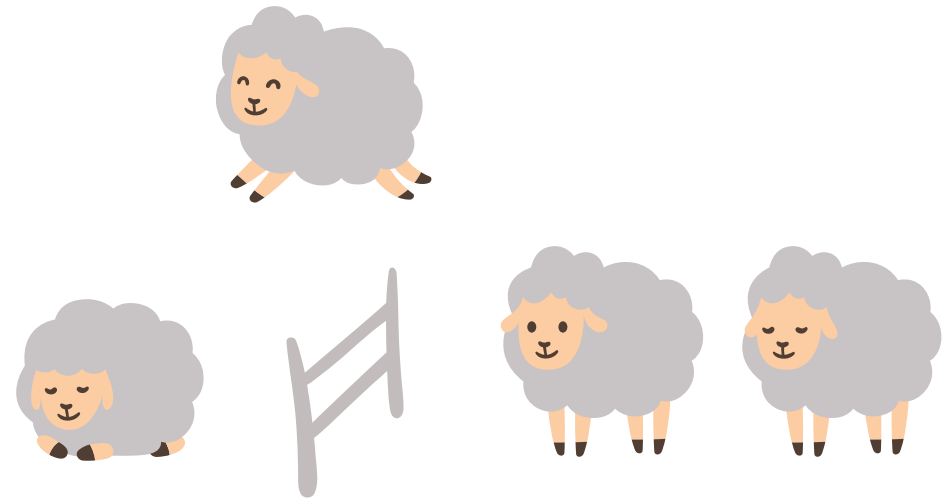
In-depth:

For something that every single person on earth is supposed to spend a third of their lives doing, a lot of us are remarkably bad at sleeping. It tends to be one of those things that you love when you're doing it (see: not being able to get up in the morning) yet we put off for as long as possible.

One of the first symptoms of depression is the on-going lack of sleep (insomnia) but just 'cause you're not sleeping well, doesn't mean you've got depression - you could just be really shit at sleeping, like so many of us are.

There is a tonne of conflicting reports on how long you should sleep for, with most hitting around 7-9 hours a night. Some people survive on barely a wink while others go into hibernation-esque slumber in the early evening - every person is different. However in this world of 24-hour news, social media, and World of Warcraft, it's getting even harder to switch the world off.

If you're having trouble falling asleep at night - try to implement a nightly routine. It may seem dumb because you've been practising the whole sleeping thing since you were a baby, but if you're struggling now then this can help.



Tips to fix your shit:

- Make your room a quiet, dark, and cool environment
- Try earplugs and an eye mask
- Only use your bed for sleeping and sex
- Exercise earlier during the day and not in the evening
- Turn televisions, computers and phones off at least an hour before you're aiming to get to sleep- backlit screens wake you up
- Read a book before bed
- Take a warm shower or bath
- Eat less later at night/in the evening
- Externalise your ideas - put a pad beside the bed and write them down
- Avoid caffeine for four to six hours before bedtime
- Take a magnesium supplement (magnesium calms nerves and anxiety and promotes deep sleep)

Short and Sweet

Small changes, big affect

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy

In short:

Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) retrains your brain by identifying and addressing negative behavioural or thought patterns that cause stress. Studies have shown that CBT is as effective as antidepressant medications and even reduces the chance of relapse, even after the therapy has ended.

In-depth:

CBT is one of the most effective forms of therapy, is available throughout the country, and has an almost 75% success rate (<https://www.healthline.com/health/behavioral-therapy#types3>) in helping people beat depression. The therapy, which revolves around confidential conversations with a trained professional, helps you to recognise negative thoughts patterns and come up with practical and useful strategies to deal with them.

With such a high success rate it is definitely worth talking to your doctor to get a referral for it - as you may be eligible for government funding, depending on your circumstances or situation.

If you can't make it to a doctor, there are online programmes available such as: www.beatingtheblues.co.nz (which is advertised as having a 70% success rate in helping people beat depression).

Meditation



In short:

There is measurable evidence that meditation can have a positive impact on anxiety, depression, pain, and stress.

In-depth:

Meditation unfortunately has a lot of connotations of hippy bullshit - which can be a massive barrier for a people who are more inclined to live a more 'conventional' life (so boring). However, meditation is very effective and there are now a number of apps and programs that have removed the airy-fairy-flowers-in-your-hair shit to focus on the beneficial parts of meditation. Apps like Headspace offer free and effective multi-week trial packs which require just 10 minutes a day.

Out of every 'tool' in this e-book meditation may seem, to some people, like the most 'wacky'. Don't let any preconceived notions hold you back from a very good tool - numerous business leaders, professional athletes, and people at the top of their chosen professions take ten minutes out of their day to train their mind - more often than not, without following any spiritual path.

Meditation is definitely worth trying, if only for a week, think of it as a free and easy-ish exercise for the mind - which is great because you don't have to work up a sweat.

Short and Sweet

Small changes, big affect

Finding Fun



In short:

Depression can destroy your will to engage in the activities you once loved – make an effort to subvert that negativity by spending time rediscovering your favourite activities.

In-depth:

It may seem silly but anything that makes you smile or laugh can actually help to convince your brain that you are happy. Invest time in watching your favourite funny movies or TV shows, visit a comedy club with friends, or read a book that makes you laugh. Simply spending time re-doing the things that you enjoyed, before you were sick, can help a lot.

Any activity that helps to raise your mood is worth attempting, even if it's something 'inconsequential' like listening to happy music, playing on a skateboard, or 'throwing the ol pig skin around' (that's a sporting reference for the sake of masculinity, just in case you were wondering).

Another, easy way to trick your brain into happiness is to get rid of all distractions, find somewhere quiet and private, and ask yourself: "What makes me happy?" and write down your answers.

It might be hard to get started but there's reasons to be happy all around us. For example, you're reading this on a computer or smartphone (which is pretty fucking amazing, when you consider how few people have access to either), so that could be something. You could be happy because you're reading this at work instead of working (and you're still getting paid), or that chipmunks exist and are so damn cute.

Whatever makes you happy, write it down and consult that list - and add to it - if you feel down again.

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Caffeine



In short:

Caffeinated drinks, such as coffee and energy drinks, can have a significant negative effect on your mood.

In-depth:

While there is a number of benefits to moderate caffeine consumption (such as providing a big boost of antioxidants and defense against liver disease) there are a number of people who are overly sensitive to it and, possibly don't realise it. For these people, and those who overdose on coffee (it happens), the negative effects of caffeine consumption are exacerbated – including depression and anxiety.

A huge number of people rely on coffee (close to 90% of American adults consume caffeine regularly) to get them through the day and are probably wanting to say "get fucked" at the suggestion of cutting down their coffee intake (that brash reaction by the way is called 'addiction', you junkie). However, caffeine has a number of negative affects - so it really is worth evaluating its importance in your life. It increases the speed of your body's elimination of many vitamins, such as potassium, zinc, magnesium, calcium, vitamin C and the B vitamins (especially the anti-stress vitamin B1). This can lead to increases in anxiety, mood swings and exhaustion.

Also, caffeine causes blood sugar to spike (which, as you'll recall from earlier, is not a good thing) and then drop below normal levels (this is the 'crash' people complain about).

Understanding Normal People

Who the fuck is 'normal' anyway?

If you have never been afflicted with depression it's incredibly hard, if not impossible, to empathise with someone who is. Part of that comes down to humans being shit at describing emotions well (thanks, English language), but it's also too hard for many people to 'feel' something they've had described to them.

Due to this lack of understanding, 'normal' folk (even friends and family members) can seem unapproachable and cold, which can make people with depression feel even more isolated, choosing to suffer in silence - which no one ever should.

A common hallmark of this disconnect is responses like "don't worry - it will get better" or "just think of happy things and you'll get happy" or "just harden up, everyone has bad days" - none of which help in the slightest.

You need to know that those responses aren't their fault, they are trying to help but they just don't understand. Other people do though - you just need to find the right people and you may have to go wider than your family or friend network.

To put their lack of understanding into perspective, think back to school as a teenager. Do you remember having a fight with your friends or being bullied by a classmate?

If you ever went to an adult about those difficulties there is a good chance you received infuriating responses like "just ignore them and they'll go away", "you won't even remember this when you grow up" or "those stupid fights don't matter in the grand scheme of things".

Those adults were trying to help (and largely they are right), however, if they're 50 years old then their ten years of schooling now equates to 20 percent of their time on earth. If you're 15 years old, ten years of schooling equates to 66.6 percent of your life - it's not just school to you, it's the majority of your life.

To an adult those past scenarios may seem insignificant but to a teenager living through them, they're everything (and it's made worse by the fact that you're literally locked in a room for close to six hours a day with your peers, not allowed to talk or escape from the situation).

It's not that those adults from your childhood, or the people you've reached out to for help, are actively trying to be assholes - it's just that they don't understand (or they've forgotten).

If you have a bad experience trying to talk to someone, don't let it put you off. You shouldn't feel that talking to someone burdens them or will make them think less of you.

If you do feel this way, find someone who has gone through depression (because they understand) and talk to them, have a yarn to your doctor (they're trained to deal with this and if they're shit, go to a different one), or call one of the toll-free confidential health services lines - so many people can help, and will help, you just have to know where to find them!

Side note: a lot of people have trouble understanding depression, especially if they've never encountered it before. However, they do understand symptoms - if you can explain how you are feeling (for example "I feel worthless..." or "I feel tired all the time...") it breaks down depression into more relatable and understandable terms.

Free helplines for people with depression:

- **Need to talk? Free call or text 1737 any time for support from a trained counsellor**
- **Lifeline - 0800 543 354 or (09) 5222 999 within Auckland**
- **Suicide Crisis Helpline - 0508 828 865 (0508 TAUTOKO)**
- **Healthline - 0800 611 116**
- **Samaritans - 0800 726 666**
- **Depression Helpline - 0800 111 757 or free text 4202 to talk to a trained counsellor**

How to Talk to Fucked Up People

We're all fucked up after all

If you're reading this and you're 'normal' (sure you are) please make every effort to talk to any of your friends or family members who have depression. There are very few words that can describe what they're going through and sometimes they don't have the ability to make the first move.

Before you start, there's a few things you need to know, think of depression in the same way that you'd think about an illness like cancer - it's not something that has an instant fix, there are a huge number of different causes and 'triggers', and everyone's depression is different but no less important than anyone else's (no matter how rich they are, or what gender or race).

You cannot fix them (they're not a broken car) - your role here is support, not judgement. We often instinctively try and give advice or relay our own anecdotes when dealing with an issue but this approach does not work - this time around you just have to listen and 'be there' for them.

How to talk to someone with depression:

- Go to a quiet, private, place and block out a significant amount of time to spend with them
- Listen, completely - that means no phones or social media - and encourage them to talk about their symptoms. It can be hard to talk about the causes of depression, if they can even be identified, and it can also be hard to understand where they're coming from (especially if you've never experienced what they're going through). However it is a lot easier to talk about symptoms, and easier to empathise with, for example; "I feel alone...", "I feel unmotivated...", "I feel like everyone hates me..." etc...
- Show that you're listening by facing them, paraphrasing what they've said, and asking questions
- Save your advice and anecdotes till later
- Do not judge them (even though you may not agree with what they're saying)

- Keep the conversation between the two of you - trust is vitally important
- Thank them for sharing
- Follow up with them after the conversation to let them know that you truly do care. Arrange another catch up or even invite them to join you in an activity (you get more points if it's a physical activity that encourages them to get outdoors).

Then when everything is sorted and they're at the top of their game again (and it might be a fair way away) accept the thanks you get from them because you deserve it - you're a fucking legend.

Free helplines for parents, family and friends:

- **Parent Help - 0800 568 856**
- **Family Services 211 Helpline - 0800 211 211**
- **Skylight - 0800 299 100 (for support through trauma, loss and grief; 9am - 5pm weekdays)**
- **Supporting Families In Mental Illness - 0800 732 825**



Fuck DEPRESSION

You are a fighter.

You are a survivor.

And that is built into your DNA.

Millions of years ago our ancestors slithered out of an ocean to fight for survival in a new, inhospitable, environment. Through evolution, disasters, climate change and, undoubtedly, a bunch of stupid fucking decisions, they fought for their lives.

Our ancestors survived wars, fires, floods, famines, and incredible hardships to bring you to this moment right here - to read this very sentence.

You are the product of millions of years of fighting for survival.

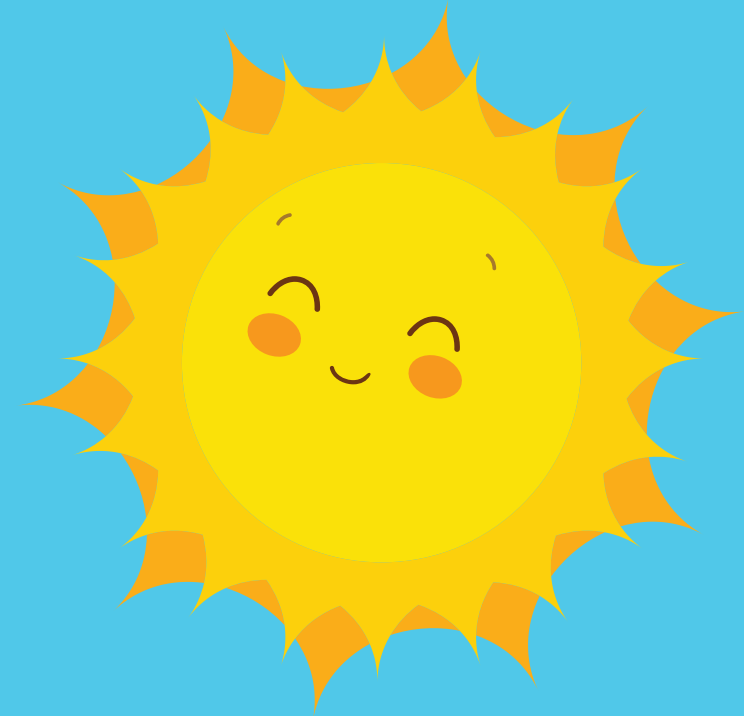
No matter what you think, fighting for your life is built into your very core.

And you know deep down that you can do that, so take control and make the changes to beat this thing.

You are stronger than you think.

You are a warrior.

And you can win this war.



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