

6 Steps to Coping **WITH DEPRESSION**

So many times, when someone is struggling with depression, others will say “take care of yourself.” However, it can be hard to know exactly what that means. If you think you have depression, getting professional help is important. **In addition to professional treatment, these tips may help you cope with your depression.**

1 Get out there.

Although everyone needs down time, resist the urge to isolate yourself. If a friend asks you to go out and you don't feel up to it, commit to something smaller—coffee instead of dinner, a walk instead of a night out. It might make you feel better.

2 Find support.

Look around your community for a local group where you can get some support. A quick internet search for “local depression support group” will likely yield you some great options.

3 Eat well.

Depression makes some people lose their appetite and others eat more. It's important to try and eat a healthy diet when you're depressed to give you the greatest chance of feeling well physically. Carbohydrates are especially helpful for serotonin production, but try complex carbs such as whole grains, fruits, and vegetables.

4 Move your feet.

Whatever movement you can do, give it a try! Exercise is a natural mood booster, releasing endorphins (feel-good hormones) and reducing stress.

5 Focus on today.

Don't try to project too far ahead. Focus on just getting through this day.

6 Try a mindfulness exercise.

Research shows that being mindful can interrupt the negative thoughts that people with depression often have. One simple exercise is to stop and focus on your breath. Another is to take a walk, focusing on the feeling of your feet on the ground and what you see.

Remember that you *will* feel better. Your depression is not forever. Feelings of hope will replace feelings of hopelessness, and your mood will improve.,