

EXERCISE AND DEPRESSION



If you have depression, exercise might be the last thing on your mind but once you get motivated, exercise can make a huge difference.

What is depression?

Depression is a very common problem which affects one in six people at some point in their life. Depression can describe a range of moods from sustained low spirits to a severe problem that affects day to day life.

How does exercise help?

- Release of brain chemicals that elevate our mood
- Gain confidence in meeting new challenges and exercise goals
- Is a distraction by taking our mind off our worries and negative thoughts
- is sociable and helps us meet new people
- can boost our self esteem and make us feel better about our body
- coping in a healthy way is a positive strategy to manage depression

What kind of Exercise is best?

- best thing is to choose something that you enjoy, that will help you stick to your plan
- aerobic exercise such as brisk walking, jogging, cycling, swimming and dancing have been found to have been particularly effective for treating depression
- team sports can help in developing new friendships
- Yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi may be useful in helping relaxation

How much Exercise is enough?

- 30 minutes or more, three to five times per week can significantly improve depression
- smaller amounts of time eg 10 or 15 minutes can make a difference too

How do I get started and stay motivated?

- Contact your University Sports Centre and arrange to meet a member of staff for an exercise consultation
- choose a physical activity that you enjoy, to help you stay motivated
- get your Doctor or mental health provider's support for exercise, as part of your treatment plan
- Be ready for setbacks, so if you miss out one or more of your sessions, don't give up, just try again the next day

Helpful resources

www.mentalhealth.org.uk
www.mind.org.uk