

Depression

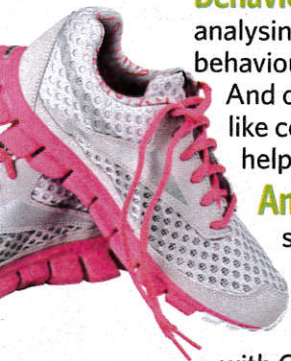
The Conventional Way

The National Institute for Health and Care Excellence's (NICE) guidelines on the treatment of depression: **Cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)** Challenge negative thoughts with the aid of self-help books, computerised CBT for cases of mild depression, and sessions with a therapist for people with more severe depression.

Behavioural activation This involves analysing, challenging and changing behaviours, such as excessive worrying. And other forms of talking treatment, like counselling or psychotherapy, to help deal with current problems.

Antidepressants for cases of severe depression (but not for mild to moderate depression, unless other treatments haven't helped), combined with CBT or psychotherapy.

Exercise 'Exercising for 20 minutes a day can make you feel better by stimulating the release of feel-good endorphins,' says Emer O'Neill, of Depression Alliance. It increases energy levels and improves appetite and sleep. Some studies show regular physical activity is as effective as medication.



The Complementary Way

Up your omega-3s Research has shown that symptoms of depression improved after eight weeks in those taking an omega-3 supplement. Try Bare Biology Lion Heart (with high levels of fatty acids, £47.50 for 150ml oil, barebiology.com).

Connect Loneliness causes depression. Stay connected with family, friends and others who have come through depression. Visit mind.org.uk, depressionalliance.org and sane.org.uk for information.

Eat well A healthy diet can have a big impact on mood: 'Eat regularly with protein and complex carbohydrates at each meal,' advises Emer. Avoid sugary foods to keep blood-sugar levels stable. Drink plenty of fluids, but cut back on alcohol.

Try acupuncture Research has found people with moderate/severe depression who had acupuncture weekly for three months showed more improvement than those who had the usual NHS care.

Be mindful Look around you and take notice. For instance, be aware of the changing seasons; savour the moment. Try an alternative therapy, like massage, which helps with mindfulness.



How The Experts Keep Healthy



Nutritional therapist and founder of **Nourishing by Nature** (nourishingbynature.co.uk), Laila Lewis shares her tips for personal health and wellbeing

What's in your medicine cabinet? I have sambucol (black elderberry extract), which is antiviral and full of antioxidants; arnica tablets and cream for bumps and bruises; Bach Flower Remedies – these are great for helping with a wide range of emotional states; and tea tree oil, which is antiseptic and

anti-fungal and useful for many minor skin conditions, such as cuts.

What's good in your fridge?

Home-made yogurt because it's full of good bacteria and easy to make. I also add fresh fruit, so there's far less sugar than shop-bought yogurts. Home-made houmous, which is great as a snack with oatcakes, vegetable sticks or on a jacket potato. Also almond milk, because it's easier to digest than dairy. Plus, lots of fruit and vegetables.

Any childhood remedies you still use?

Home-made chicken broth – it's full of easily absorbable vitamins and minerals. Eating it a couple of spoonfuls at a time soothes the digestion.

Not As Good As It Seems

Granola

The oats help to lower cholesterol, while Brazil nuts, almonds, hazelnuts, dried fruits and seeds provide essential vitamins and minerals, but the oats are rolled in honey/sugar/molasses/agave syrup, so there's a high sugar content from that and the dried fruits. Plus, it's so delicious, most of us find it hard to just sprinkle a single tablespoon on our healthy, low-fat yogurt.

