

## MOVING THROUGH DEPRESSION

Depression can be a lot like a bout with the flu or some other virus. You feel awful and have no energy. You move slow, and even brushing your teeth can feel like a monumental task. All you want to do is curl up under a warm blanket and be left alone. And yet, while this may be just the thing your body needs to recover from illness, giving in to that desire to do nothing can actually make your depression worse! As Newton's first law of motion teaches, "a body at rest tends to stay at rest."

So what's the best remedy when the cloud of depression has descended upon you? Finding ways to do things that will get you going and create some positive energy. That usually means doing things that are the complete opposite of how you feel. Get up and move your body in some way. Try watching funny videos or listening to upbeat music. Spend time outdoors.

As you can imagine, doing things that require energy, that you don't feel like doing in the first place, can be a pretty tough sell to someone who is depressed. So here are three tips to help get you going.

### 1. SET SMALL GOALS

Remember...slow and steady wins the race. If you try to tackle too much, it's easy to feel overwhelmed and give up before you even get started. Aim for something reasonable and try to build some consistency. On the really depressed days, that might mean brushing your teeth or showering. Even something so small can keep you from sinking further, and maybe even help you find some momentum to do more. If you don't have the energy to take a walk, maybe sit outside for a few minutes, or walk out to get the mail. You still get the benefit of fresh air (and sunshine, if you're lucky!) and it might even entice you to do more.

### 2. DO IT EVEN IF YOU DON'T FEEL LIKE IT

Unfortunately, the chances of you actually feeling motivated to do the things that can be helpful is pretty slim. And while it's possible doing them will allow you to feel better, you may still find it difficult to fully enjoy anything. **That's okay!** Watching funny videos might not get you laughing, but even the slightest of smiles can cause changes in your brain, through the release of neurotransmitters that reduce stress and lift your mood.

### 3. BE A GOOD COACH

One of the biggest pitfalls people run into when trying these suggestions is that they forget to give themselves credit! It's easy to get down on yourself instead. "So you showered—big deal! And you'll probably do nothing the rest of the day...what a loser!" With talk like that, whose side are you on?! The truth is, **what** you are doing isn't nearly as important as the **process** of doing something. You have a much greater chance to succeed if you are understanding of your limitations and offer words of encouragement. It may help to think about what you might say to a friend that was going through what you are, as we tend to be much kinder to others.

Dealing with depression is not easy. If you could use more ideas, or someone to support you along the way, consider finding a counselor to help you.