

Treating Depression the Natural Way

Millions of Americans take anti-depressant medication. For many of those people, the effects are great and their lives become more fulfilled and functional. However, there are also many people who take these medications, and fall short of the robust response one would want. So often, medication is not the end all be all of treatment. There is a growing body of research and evidence that points to more natural ways of treating depression, as well as other emotional disorders. Alone, or in conjunction with a medication, these methods can prove to improve mood, enhance overall well-being, and prolong life.

There are numerous medical ailments that can cause depression. Hormonal imbalances in the thyroid and adrenal glands often have adverse affects on moods. Also, the sex hormones of testosterone and estrogen have a direct effect on moods. Addressing depression naturally starts with checking these important hormones, and ruling out imbalances. Neurological diseases and events such as stroke, heart attack, Parkinson's Disease, and multiple sclerosis, often come with an element of depression with them, both neurologically and in the impact of these conditions on functioning. Depression has also been linked to HIV, Lyme Disease, and Hepatitis C. It's clear that so many different physical ailments can result in depression, and a clear workout and ongoing treatment are key to ruling out medical conditions.

Exercise has been proven, over and over again, to be a natural anti-depressant. Research shows that regular exercise starts a magnificent chain reaction chemically, which both increases mood, and reduces chance of physical disease and troubles. Exercise releases endorphins, the chemical that produces happiness. This is the neurological basis for the commonly expressed "runner's high." Regular exercise also has the added effect of building valuable psychological resources such as confidence, social interactions, will power, and discipline. In a similar way yoga serves to target the autonomic nervous system, central to a well functioning brain.

Diet plays a key role in so many aspects of our lives and our successful functioning. A diet rich in Omega 3s, protein, and healthy fats has been proven to boost serotonin, and chemical responsible for our moods and sense of happiness. Caffeine has also been shown to reduce serotonin levels. Working with a qualified professional on how diet, in addition to other factors, play into mood is an important step in managing and avoiding emotional struggles.

Meditation and guided imagery are increasingly getting attention in terms of their benefits on mood. Regular meditation practices have been shown to reduce persistent anxiety and stress, often when no other treatment has worked. Stress and worry are often lead ups to depression and a low mood. Managing stress is always a great prevention for depression. Meditation teaches to weather negative thinking, intense bodily sensations, and troublesome emotions, and stay focused on that which is good and helpful.

It is abundantly clear that depression and other mood struggles can be addressed through attention to our bodies and health patterns, and addressing the limitations naturally. Although some forms of emotional and mental struggle can only be treated with medication, these natural methods have been proven to improve the course of mental illness throughout the lifespan, and serve as a preventative to mental illness worsening. Emotional and mental stress aside, focusing on well being through natural methods reduces the likelihood of struggling with depression and other emotional issues, as well as keeps us healthy and focused.

References

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Summary

Medication has been the long standing treatment when it comes to emotional and mental disorder. However, the limitations of these medications have also become clearer. To address this, much research has been done on the enhancement of medication through natural treatments, as well as natural methods as a preventative and managing tool for emotional struggles. Exercise, diet, mindfulness and meditation, as well as physical ailments all play a role in our emotional life, for better or worse. Holistic ideas should be part of every treatment plan, whether it be for medical or emotional treatment, or as part of a comprehensive lifestyle plan to maintain well-being.