

# Managing Depression at Home

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Depression and its symptoms can affect every aspect of your life, even when you're at home. Depression often has a significant impact on energy and motivation to engage in self-care and daily activities that typically take place at home. For some individuals, home may serve as a sanctuary from the symptoms of depression. For others, it can be a space where the struggle with depression feels even more pronounced. Regardless of your home environment, the following tools are designed to help you manage depression at home and on the go. These techniques focus on self-care tasks, reframing negative thoughts, and practicing mindfulness. Learn about each tool and try them out at home and other areas of your life!

## ToolBox Skills:

Sleep Hygiene  
Positive Affirmations  
Mindfulness  
Break Down the Day  
Self-Care Checklist



# Sleep Hygiene

Changes in sleep patterns are often one of the first physical symptoms of depression. Individuals either struggle to fall asleep or oversleep; both extremes can lead to brain fog, irritability, and fatigue. Below are tips to improve sleep hygiene, which is vital for everyone's health and wellness, regardless of mental health challenges.

**Sleep Routine**—Do you follow a similar routine each night before getting into bed? Following a routine can train your brain to prepare itself for sleep each time these actions are performed.

**Avoid Screens**—Most people know that too much screen time can cause trouble sleeping. Can you challenge yourself to put your phone down one hour before bedtime?

**Exercise**—30 minutes of exercise a day can help improve your sleep. Avoid exercising 2 hours before bedtime as it can make it difficult to fall asleep.

**Daylight**—Exposure to sunlight each day helps keep your body in rhythm and can improve sleep and energy levels.

**Bed Sanctuary**—It's best to only use your bed for sleeping. When you use your bed for homework, leisure, etc., your brain confuses it as a place for work instead of sleep. Try only using your bed for sleeping this week to retrain your brain.

**Snoozing**—Hitting snooze can feel nice, but too many snoozes can leave you feeling more tired. Try to limit yourself to one snooze and consider placing your alarm across the room to encourage getting up and moving in the morning.

**Drink water**—If you feel fatigued throughout the day, try increasing your water intake. This can improve energy and decrease fatigue.

**Walk**—Feel like you need a nap, a 15-minute walk outside can help by increasing oxygen levels and boosting energy, similar to napping.

# Positive Affirmations

Depressive thoughts can leave you feeling down about yourself and your achievements. Positive affirmations are quick and simple ways to reframe your thoughts to cultivate a more positive and self-love attitude. Positive affirmations are short mantras you audibly say to yourself while looking in a mirror. Even if you don't fully believe them, practice saying them to yourself; this simple action will begin to rewire the brain to amplify positive thoughts about yourself instead of negative ones.

I am worthy.  
I am smart.  
I am confident.  
I am brave.  
I have done great things.  
I will do great things.

I am resilient.  
This will pass.  
I have done hard things before.  
I can do hard things.  
I am strong.  
I won't let my negativity win.

Today will be a good day.  
I mean something to others.  
I am good friend.  
I am a good student.  
I am a good teammate.  
I am beautiful.

# Mindfulness

When you are experiencing depression, it can feel like everything you go through occurs under a tinted film of negative thoughts and feelings. Mindfulness is a practice of pausing and being present in the here and now. It allows you to step out from behind the film of depression and focus on what you are doing and how you are feeling. Mindfulness doesn't have to be meditation; in fact, just about anything can be a mindful practice if you take the time to breathe, notice, and be present.

Think about engaging in a sport. If you are stressed, worrying about the day's events, and ruminating over negative thoughts and feelings, you cannot be successful in your sport. On the flip side, if you step on the field and, for the 60 minutes you are playing, let go of the day's events and focus on what is happening on the field and around you, you will be significantly more successful. This is mindful playing.

**Think to yourself: What daily task could you make more mindful? (Examples: eating, driving, watching T.V., homework.) When you are mindful, explore all five senses. What are you seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, and hearing during this task?**



Mindfulness can also be a more traditional meditation practice, such as deep breathing, or guided visualization. These practices encourage you to focus, be present, and experience the moment you are in. Below are some free resources that serve as excellent introductions to mindfulness practices.

**Try one for yourself. After you practice mindfulness, reflect on how you are feeling. Has your mood shifted? Do you feel you can think more clearly?**

## Video Tutorials:

- “Growing Up Stressed or Growing Up Mindful” by TEDxYouth Talk
- “Simple Lovingkindness Guided Meditation for Teenagers” by Mallory Grimste on Youtube
- “A Dozen Videos for Teaching Mindfulness for Teens” by Center for Adolescent Studies

## Apps:



**Calm**  
Sleep, Meditation, Relaxation



**Happier meditation**  
Practice Healthy Mindfulness



**Headspace: Meditation & Sleep**  
Mental Health, Anxiety, Stress



**Healthy Minds Program**  
Meditation & Mindfulness

# Break Down the Day


Have you ever planned a productive day but ended up oversleeping or forgetting a meeting? These disruptions can make you feel like your entire day is a failure, causing you to abandon your to-do list completely. Depression can impact your motivation and lead to negative thoughts, making you feel as though your day is wasted from a singular negative event. A helpful strategy to combat this is to break your day into four quarters. If you encounter a setback in one quarter, you still have opportunities to succeed in the others and turn the day around. This seemingly simple shift in perspective can help you stay productive and motivated all day long.

- Make a plan for each quarter.
- If one quarter of your day doesn't go as planned that okay! Move onto the next quarter.
- Every 4 hours is a new start!

6:00 AM - 10:00 AM	10:00 AM - 2:00 PM
2:00 PM - 6:00 PM	6:00 PM - 10:00 PM

## Self-Care Checklist

When you're feeling depressed, even the simplest self-care tasks can feel overwhelming. Tasks like brushing your teeth may seem impossible, and skipping them can make you feel even more drained, isolated, and stuck. Depression can make it hard to get up and going, but sometimes, just starting small—like getting ready in the morning—can give your brain the boost it needs to move through the day. This checklist includes simple self-care tasks that can help you stay on track and begin to feel a little better, even if it's just one step at a time. Print it out and hang it somewhere you'll see it—like your mirror—so you can stay motivated to care for yourself and take on the day.



☐ Brush Teeth

☐ Wash Face

☐ Shower

☐ Change Clothes

☐ Put on Deodorant