

BEATING THE WINTER BLUES

Attachment 3

It's easy to convince ourselves to stay cocooned inside and 'hibernate' during the winter months. As the cold weather begins to creep in some people may find themselves reluctant to leave the house and instead start sleeping and eating more and limit their social contact. However, this isn't ideal for anyone and there are some easy ways we can help keep our mental (and physical!) health in tip-top shape. What to do:

Social support

In colder weather we don't always feel like going out as often, however, we should commit to participate in a few social activities each week. Socialising and getting out of the house can be a major help in recovering from or avoiding bouts of depression. If you find yourself short on opportunities, perhaps consider joining a local club or taking up a new hobby, such as a sporting activity or musical instrument. Once you are engaged in your activity you'll often find that even the cold, wet weather can't dampen your good mood.



Eating

With cold weather it becomes easier to over eat. We can crave comfort foods and tend to indulge in our favourite treats more often than in summer. But while it's ok to treat ourselves every now and again, these foods are not nutritious enough for us in the long term. Instead spoil your body with healthy, delicious soups and seasonal vegetables, which will help give you both a healthy body and a healthy mind.

Breathing Techniques

Learn to breathe well! If you do yoga or any other form of meditation, you'll know that focusing on breathing is part of the practice. Focusing on breathing is often useful for lifting depression. Try out the phone app 'Smiling Mind'. It will get you started on the practice of mindful breathing.

DID YOU KNOW?

That almost one in five Australians will experience a mental health problem each year. The most common forms of mental illness are depression and anxiety.

Relationships Australia WA works in partnership with Act-Belong-Commit to promote its message.

Act-Belong-Commit says...

there is evidence to suggest that people who exercise on a regular basis experience higher life satisfaction levels than people who do not exercise at all. Even a small amount of physical activity can reduce anxiety, depression and improve overall general wellbeing.

Seeking early help is key to keeping on top of your mental health. If you think you're slipping into an ongoing low mood, just use your free EAP to see one of our counsellors. Whatever you do, don't simply suffer. With the cold and dark fast approaching the time to stop depression is now.

ACT

Keep in mind Act-Belong-Commit's advice for keeping mentally healthy.

keep mentally, physically, socially and spiritually active: take a walk, say g'day, read a book, do a crossword, dance, play cards, stop for a chat.

BELONG

join a book club, take a cooking class, be more involved in groups you are already a member of, go along to community events.

COMMIT

take up a cause, help a neighbour, learn something new, take on a challenge, volunteer.

For more information or tips on how to become mentally healthy visit their website at www.actbelongcommit.org.au



Exercise

We've heard it all before and know that exercise is important for our physical health. But what many people may not realise is that it is equally as important for our mental health. Exercise often helps significantly improve our mood, once we bring ourselves to do it. To get motivated:

- Exercising at the same time each day so it becomes routine and a habit.
- Do an activity that you enjoy most, such as a favourite sport, or yoga classes. Don't pick an activity you really don't like doing.
- Remind yourself before you get started about how good you will feel during and after your exercise. Reconfirming the link between exercise and mood makes it easier to approach in the future.
- Set small achievable exercise goals. Don't attempt to run a marathon on your first session. Even 15 minutes to start off with is a good accomplishment.
- Exercise with other people. Not only does this double as a social outing, it's harder to quit when others are involved.

For more information:

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