

# FEELING DEPRESSED? 10 THINGS YOU CAN TRY BEFORE CALLING YOUR DOCTOR

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Just as you don't have to call your physician for every little ache, pain, and sniffle, you don't have to run to your doctor because you're feeling a little depressed. **Of course, if you're severely depressed or are considering harming yourself, call your doctor right away.**

Take a quick survey of your life. You might have a good reason to feel depressed. Therapy and a daily pill won't miraculously alter your life automatically, but they might put you in a better position to rebuild your life.

Then again, you might be able to get yourself back on track with a little work.

### Consider trying these strategies to address your depression:

- 1. Take care of your body.** When your body is poorly taken care of, your mind suffers as well. One of the best things you can do when you're feeling depressed is to put some emphasis on your body. **Eight hours of sleep, healthy food, and a reasonable dose of exercise can do wonders for your mood.**
- 2. Spruce up your environment.** Feeling under the weather psychologically? It's time to declutter. Buy a plant. Hang some artwork that you love. Pick up your bedroom and make your bed.
- 3. Get outside.** Fresh air and sunshine can be just what you need when your mood is poor. Go for a long walk and just enjoy being outside. Listen to the birds or your favorite music. Get out of your head for an hour.

4. **Play a game.** It could be a board game, lawn game, or video game. Play a game and have some fun. If you can do it with someone else, that's even better. Who doesn't like a good game?
  
5. **Create something.** Paint a picture. Build a deck on your house. Hang a shelf in the garage. Make a website. Bedazzle your jeans. Create a scrapbook. Create something and notice how it impacts your mood.
  
6. **Use affirmations. Fill your mind and attention with positive thoughts and ideas** by using affirmations. Make a list of 10 positive things you can say to yourself and repeat them as much as you can. Whenever a negative thought appears, try using your affirmations and see what happens.
  
7. **Stay busy.** This one is tough, because you likely want to sit around and do nothing, but that's likely to make you feel even worse. Use your time wisely by giving some of the other tips on the list a try.
  
8. **Interact with others.** Avoid spending all of your time alone. At the very least, find someone online to chat with. **Ideally, find someone you can see in the flesh and have a conversation with them.**
  
9. **Remember your accomplishments.** Give yourself something positive to think about by remembering all the great things you've done. Relive that little league homerun, graduating, or finishing your first road race.
  
10. **Make a reasonable plan for the future and begin working on it.** Depression leads to getting stuck. One of the best ways to get unstuck is to create a vision for the future and begin working toward that. It might give your mood a great boost.

**Depression should be taken seriously,** but that doesn't mean that every bout of

depression requires professional medical care. There are things you can try before calling your physician. Again, if you're really under the weather or have thoughts of hurting yourself, ensure that you see your doctor.