

DEPRESSION & EXERCISE

PUBLIC

WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression is a common, potentially debilitating condition whereby people experience sadness, loss of interest or pleasure and feelings of guilt or low self-worth. Depression may also manifest as disturbances in sleep, concentration, appetite, or as persistent fatigue (1). Depression ranks as a leading cause of disability worldwide, affecting more than 264 million people (2).

WHY IS PHYSICAL ACTIVITY OR EXERCISE IMPORTANT IN THE MANAGEMENT OF DEPRESSION?

Regular physical activity or exercise provides many benefits for people with depression (3) including:

- » A lower risk of depression, now and in the future;
- » Reduced weight gain, diabetes risk and cardiovascular disease risk associated with depression;
- » Improved cardiovascular fitness

Physical activity or exercise can also help reduce depression symptoms associated with other physical health conditions such as heart disease, Parkinsons Disease, and cancer (4).

WHAT TYPE OF EXERCISE MIGHT BE BENEFICIAL FOR PEOPLE WITH DEPRESSION?

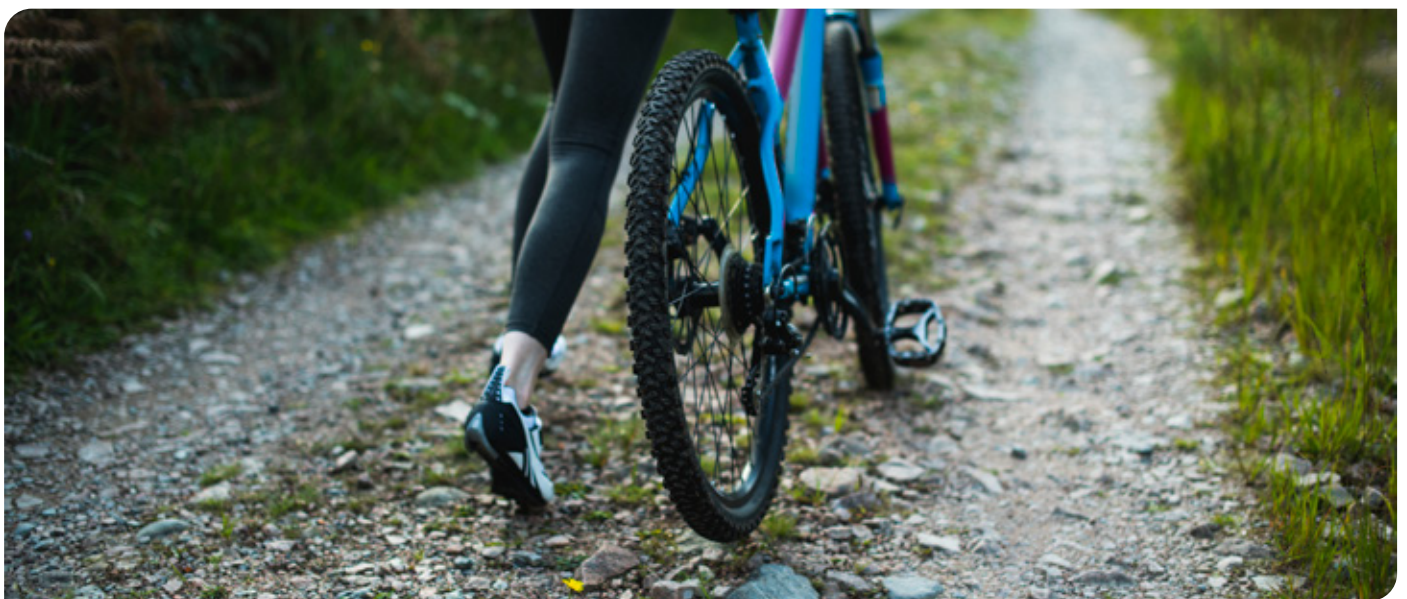
The consensus based on multiple studies and systematic reviews indicates physical activity or exercise programs similar to that recommended for the general population is likely to be beneficial for people with depression. This is summarised below.

Frequency	Intensity	Time	Type	Supervision	Setting
Most days of the week with resistance training on 2 non-consecutive days each week	Low - moderate or patient-preferred. Emerging evidence supports high intensity exercise for some people	30-60 minutes per session. Starting with small amounts of 5-10 minutes may also be effective	Aerobic activity such as walking, cycling, or swimming. Most important is that the activity is enjoyable. For resistance training, machines, free weights, bodyweight, or resistance band exercises may be effective	Appropriately trained and qualified personnel such as Accredited Exercise Physiologist or Physiotherapist may support adherence	Activities undertaken in a group or on your own can be beneficial



HOW DO I COMMENCE AN EXERCISE PROGRAM?

Talk to your treating specialist about an exercise program that suits your personal preferences and circumstances. They may refer you to a Physiotherapist or Accredited Exercise Physiologist, who has specialised training in the design and delivery of exercise and lifestyle interventions for people with chronic and complex conditions including depression.



RELATED INFORMATION AND REFERENCES

Exercise is Medicine Australia www.exerciseismedicine.org.au
Exercise Right www.exerciseright.com.au

Prepared by Dr Robert Stanton and Dr Oscar Lederman.

Find a Physiotherapist www.choose.physio
Find an Accredited Exercise Physiologist www.essa.org.au

1. WHO. (2014). Depression: definition Retrieved 4 November 2020, from <http://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/pages/news/news/2012/10/depression-in-europe/depression-definition>
2. WHO (2020) Depression. Retrieved 4 November 2020 from <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/depression>

3. Hu, et al. (2020). Exercise interventions for the prevention of depression: a systematic review of meta-analyses. BMC Public Health, 20(1), 1255.
4. Roeh, et al. (2019). Depression in somatic disorders: Is there a beneficial effect of exercise? Frontiers in Psychiatry, 10(141).