



Take AIM at Preventing Depression.

The purpose of this guide is to help you take AIM at preventing and addressing depression through:

- 1. Awareness.** Know the contributors to depression, signs, and symptoms; and prevention methods.
- 2. Implementation.** Review your current daily routine. Set simple goals for activities where you identify a needed change.
- 3. Monitoring.** Track your involvement in the various activities, and your progress on the goals you set.



Awareness.

The direct causes of depression are uncertain, however, there are certain contributors that may lead to a depressed mood; these include, but are not limited to:

- Genetic – Runs in the family
- Biological – Hormonal imbalances
- Environmental – External stressors (i.e. finances, job, relationships, etc.)
- Psychological – Sad or depressed mood, lack of motivation, feelings of hopelessness
- Physical – Physical limitations or adjustments from wound, illness, or injury¹

Signs and symptoms of depression*:

- Loss of pleasure in things you used to enjoy
- Significant weight gain or loss
- Insomnia or sleeping too much
- Feeling very fidgety or very lethargic
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Feelings of worthlessness or feeling guilt
- Less able to concentrate and think clearly
- Recurring thoughts of death or suicide²

*Not everyone will experience the same signs and symptoms or to the same degree.

Actions that may help you prevent or mitigate depression:

- Diet – Eat regularly and healthfully*
- Sleep – Get adequate sleep
- Exercise – Get active*
- Connect – Social time with friends and family
- Counsel – Someone to listen to you
- Community – Support system

*In the case of diet and exercise, consult with your doctor before implementing any changes.

Turn to the checklist on the other side of the page to determine which preventive methods you may need to focus on:

1. Read the recommendations for depression prevention
2. Check “currently meet” if you meet the requirements
3. Check “change required” if you do not meet the requirements
4. If change is required, write a simple goal to move in the direction of the recommended action; start small
5. Then, monitor your goals by keeping track of your diet, sleep, etc.

It is normal to feel sad or depressed in response to certain life events. However, if your symptoms become overwhelming, interfere with your daily functioning, or you have thoughts of suicide, contact a health care professional, chaplain, corpsman, or MTF immediately. Call the Military Crisis Line at 1-800-273-8255 and press 1, text 838255 or chat live online at www.militarycrisisline.net.



Implementation.

Diet Recommendations: Balance calories with physical activity; pay attention to weight loss or gain; consume fruits, vegetables, whole grains, fat-free and low-fat dairy products, and seafood. ¹ Target weight loss & gain	Sleep Recommendations: Adults generally require 7-8 hours of sleep per night. Lack of sleep can lead to poor mental and physical health, and impact healing and recovery. Target insomnia, fatigue, & energy loss.	Exercise Recommendations: Per week: 150 minutes of moderate activity, 75 minutes of high-intensity activity, or a mix of moderate and high. ³ Target fatigue, energy loss, & lethargy	Connect Recommendations: Commit to surrounding yourself with people who are important to you. Spend time socializing and doing activities you enjoy. Target isolation & loss of pleasure	Counsel Recommendations: Talk to someone you trust, such as a chaplain or counselor. Sharing your concerns may help lighten the load. Target feelings of worthlessness or helplessness	Community Recommendations: Join a social support group in your military community or local area; also consider religious or sports based groups. Target isolation & loss of pleasure
<input type="checkbox"/> Currently meet	<input type="checkbox"/> Currently meet	<input type="checkbox"/> Currently meet	<input type="checkbox"/> Currently meet	<input type="checkbox"/> Currently meet	<input type="checkbox"/> Currently meet
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Monitoring.

Diet: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eat regularly and healthfully • Keep a diet log • Consult with your Doctor Resources: Diet log	Sleep: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Set a sleep schedule • Keep a sleep log • Consult with your doctor if you have sleep concerns Resources: Sleep log	Exercise: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consult your doctor about starting an exercise routine • Keep an exercise log Resources: Exercise log	Connect: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commit to meeting and connecting with friends and family at least once per week; in-person, over the phone, email, etc. 	Counsel: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Write down what you're thinking • See a counselor or chaplain you trust Resources: Chaplain services	Community: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actively participate in a social support or community group • Consult your care team for specific support or activity groups for you
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Exercise Log.

Date	Type of exercise	Duration	Intensity (Easy, medium, hard)	Notes



Monitor: Journal.

Jot down your thoughts and feelings throughout the week. Don't get overwhelmed or discouraged by thinking you have to write a lot. Instead start small. Just get a few words down on paper. Write down how you are doing to help you determine whether you feel better down the road.

Entry:

Entry:

Entry:

Entry:
