

Twelve Techniques for Alleviating Depression

1. Eat healthy.
2. Stick to priorities.
3. Look for the novel.
4. Persist.
5. Resolve conflicts.
6. Exercise.
7. Maintain relations.
8. Learn relaxation methods.
9. Dispute negative thinking.
10. Use downtime constructively.
11. Plan special activities.
12. Get fresh air and sun.

1. I made sure that I immediately avoided mental traps associated with depressive thinking. I monitored my self-talk and identified and contested depressive thinking.

2. I joined a health club and forced myself to exercise at least five times a week. This helped me break the depressive cycle, overcome fatigue, and improve my concentration.

3. Despite a poor appetite, I forced myself to eat a balanced diet.

4. I turned my early morning awakening to advantage. During the period between 4:00 A.M., when I awoke, and 9:00 A.M., when I started seeing clients, I used the time to write a book titled *Do It Now: How to Break the Procrastination Habit* (1998). I found this writing tedious. Often I felt bogged down. But I forced myself to attend, concentrate, and persist.

5. I acted to maintain good relationships with people and to seek opportunities to be with people. During those times, I refused to complain about how I felt. Instead, I encouraged people to speak more about themselves. Since most people like to hear themselves talk, this worked well.

6. I pushed myself to resolve conflicts and to overcome difficulties as they arose, and before they might fester.

7. I did not concern myself over interrupted sleep. Rather, I used a Jacobson's muscular relaxation technique when I couldn't fall back to sleep. I found that this had restorative value. (See chapter 14 for a description of this procedure.)

8. I stuck to my main priorities and drastically cut back on low priorities. Simultaneously, I backed off and tried not to overtax myself at low energy periods.

9. I made sure I got out in the sun and walked for about a half hour a day. I did this around noon.

10. Each day I tried to find something I hadn't seen before. This helped shift my focus from my depressed mood onto events that were novel. Seeking novelty served as a temporary distraction from depression.