

Functional Depression and Anxiety and How to Fight Them

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What exactly are high functioning depression and anxiety? Let's take a detailed look at these rising mental health disorders.

- Not everyone is lucky enough to have the **benefit of positive mental health**. Depression and anxiety are common conditions that can have a significant impact on everyday life.
- People who experience functional depression experience the same symptoms (sadness, loss of energy, fatigue, changes in eating habits, etc.) that people with [serious depression](#) have, but they are less severe.
- Depression may be caused by brain chemistry or physiology, hormones, or genes.
- **Anxiety symptoms** in men and women include nervousness, restlessness, sweating, difficulty sleeping, and gastrointestinal symptoms ([1](#)).
- If you're experiencing depression or anxiety, seek medical help right away to help restore the **benefits of positive mental health**.
- There are many lifestyle **ways to improve mental health**, such as exercise, lowering stress, eating well, and sleeping adequately.

Introduction to Mental Health

Mental health problems like depression and anxiety are more common than you might imagine. According to the [World Health Organization](#), over 264 million people worldwide are going through depression. The statistics are the same for anxiety disorders ([2](#)).

High functioning depression and anxiety may not be obvious to an outside observer. People often suffer internally while pushing themselves to accomplish tasks or meet goals. Inside they may be coping with fatigue, self-doubt, sadness, fear, and other issues.

Symptoms of depression usually do not disappear without treatment. They often require the care of a medical professional, but there are other **ways to improve mental health** alongside a doctor's care.

Defining Depression

According to the [American Psychiatric Association](#), depression is a serious illness characterized by sadness, loss of enjoyment in activities you once loved, low energy, changes in eating habits, feelings of worthlessness, difficulty concentrating, slower movements or speech, restless activity, and thoughts of suicide. The condition can seriously impact your **mental and emotional health**.

Reasons for Depression

Several factors affect our **mental and emotional health**, leading to depression. The most common ones are as follows (3):

- **Genetics** – There is an inherited component to depression in that you are more likely to develop it if close family members have suffered from it. As of yet, there is no conclusion on which genes cause depression and which lead to **positive mental health**, but research is ongoing.
- **Brain Chemicals** – Often, a decline in brain chemicals like serotonin can lead to depression. Most antidepressant medications try to raise levels of key mood neurotransmitters.
- **Hormonal Shifts** – Life changes like pregnancy or menopause can cause changes in hormones, which can affect **mental and emotional health**. This may also occur in the case of a thyroid condition.
- **Brain Differences** – There is some evidence that people with depression have differences in brain structure compared to those who do not.

Also, traumatic events can have a powerful impact on **mental and emotional health** and lead to depression. These may include abuse, the death of a loved one, job loss, serious illness, or other key factors.

Coping with Depression

If you are suffering from **high functioning depression or anxiety**, it is important to seek treatment and find ways to cope. Go to your doctor and decide on a treatment plan so you can move forward. Also, talk to your friends and loved ones about how you feel. Seek support from those around you.

There are several **ways to improve mental health** naturally or through lifestyle changes. These can have a tremendous impact on decreasing feelings of both depression and anxiety.

Methods for Reducing Depression

Many people think that medication and psychotherapy are the only **ways to improve mental health**, but that is not the case. There are many life modifications you can make to improve your mental state and overall sense of well-being.

These methods are particularly helpful for people with [high functioning depression and anxiety](#). Those with more serious conditions will also need quite a bit of medical intervention.

1. Regular Exercise

There is evidence that you can greatly improve your **mental health through exercise**. It is beneficial to exercise a minimum of several times a week. This can be very [difficult for some people](#) going through depression, so know that you can start small. If all you can do is a walk around the block, do that and try for a little more the next day.

Exercise releases mood-boosting chemicals called endorphins. It also improves immunity and calms the central nervous system (4). An article in [Primary Care Companion to the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry](#) discussed the many benefits of exercise for the clinically depressed.

2. Nutritious Diet

There is much truth to the saying, 'you are what you eat.' One of the best **ways to improve mental health** naturally is by [following a healthy diet](#) rich in vitamins, minerals, and antioxidants. Include plenty of fatty fish, which is rich in omega fatty acids and lean meat, nuts, whole grains, and some dairy.

Avoiding processed foods and sugars can do a lot for **high functioning depression and anxiety**. Sugar raises glucose levels and then drops them down low, which can contribute to both depression and anxiety.

3. Maintain a Normal Weight

There is a significant causal link between depression and obesity (5). This may be due to low self-esteem, resulting from negative societal perceptions of overweight people. Additionally, it could result from the added medical issues that obesity can bring.

If you follow a healthy diet, exercise, and avoid sugars, your weight should decrease, and your **mental and emotional health** should improve. A nutritionist can help you with [menu planning](#) and setting goals.

4. Decrease Your Stress Levels

Stress can lead to depression. It can also worsen it and harm the immune system (6). There are some excellent methods **to manage anxiety** and stress, including yoga, mindfulness, and meditation.

Moreover, the approaches discussed here, including exercise, a good diet, adequate sleep, time with loved ones, and natural supplements, are excellent methods. **Anxiety symptoms in men** tend to be less severe than in women, so women have to be diligent about decreasing stress.

5. Get Enough Sleep

According to [Johns Hopkins Medicine](#), both depression and anxiety can greatly affect sleep, and in turn, poor sleep can make these issues worse. Besides, depression leads to less slow-wave sleep that's important for proper functioning.

There are ways to help [improve your sleep](#) besides medication. It is important to have a regular sleep routine, sleeping and waking at the same hour each day. You should follow the same process every night before you go to bed, such as teeth brushing and your skincare routine.

Avoid using technology before you turn in for the night, as it can disrupt sleep. Make sure the lights are all out in the room. Finally, make sure you are as comfortable as possible.

6. Socialize with Loved Ones

When people experience depression, they will often isolate themselves and avoid social situations. The loneliness and lack of social support can worsen the symptoms and cause people to lose perspective. Spending time with friends and family can do a lot to improve **high functioning depression and anxiety**. This is true even if you only meet on Zoom.

Be as open as possible with your loved ones and listen to their feedback. Also, try to join some online groups, which can enhance your social life. A study published in the [International Journal of Mental Health Systems](#) found that social support moderates the effects of depression.

7. Stay Away from People Who Are Bad for You

[Toxic people](#) can lead to **anxiety symptoms in men** and women. There are people out there who have problematic character traits, which lead them to put others down. Inevitably, this type of personality will attempt to make you feel bad about yourself. This is the last thing that someone with depression or anxiety needs.

Learn what qualities are associated with this type of person and stay away. If you have acquaintances or friends who behave this way, consider cutting them out of your life for your mental health.

8. Do What You Love

When people become depressed, they often lose interest in everything around them, including things they love to do. Make a special point of getting involved in your hobbies

and interests again, even if you only have the energy for a short while each day. Take the time to remember who you are.

Taking part in the things that bring you joy – be they painting, writing, fixing a car, hiking, or playing with your pets – may help to gradually lift your feelings of depression.

9. Try Organic Supplements

There are several organic products on the market, which offer mood support if you are looking for a homeopathic solution. These should not be a substitute for seeking medical care and perhaps taking prescription medication. Besides, you must get approval from your doctor before taking them.

These supplements often contain ingredients such as St. John's Wort, 5-HTP, L-theanine, and saffron, which increase levels of key mood neurotransmitters in the brain. They can elevate positive emotions and decrease [anxiety symptoms in men](#) and women.

10. Go Out in the Sun

People who suffer from depression will often avoid going outside very often. However, the sun can be a powerful tool for elevating positive emotions. There is evidence that it can increase levels of serotonin in the brain ([7](#)). In addition to this, sunshine is the primary way we take in Vitamin D, and this nutrient plays an important role in depression.

According to [Issues in Mental Health Nursing](#), a deficiency in Vitamin D could contribute to the development of depression. Also, supplementing with this vitamin could be an effective treatment for lifting mood. The authors suggest regular checks to ensure that your levels are normal.

11. Listen to Your Favorite Tunes

When you are feeling run down and unhappy, try listening to your favorite music. Research confirms that music has a way of uplifting us and bringing on positive emotions and memories.

Similarly, playing music is also uplifting, especially if you do it with other people who share the same joy. The social aspect of the activity provides you with some of the social support you need.

A study published in [Frontiers in Psychology](#) concluded that listening to music can help to ease depression and increase positive mood. It can also help you to be more receptive to positivity from others.

12. Take Care of Your Physical Health

There are quite a few studies, which show a strong connection between regular physical exercise and reducing the symptoms of depression. Research in the [Journals of Gerontology](#) concluded that physical exercise helped to treat both mild and severe depression, as well as improving pain symptoms in the body.

Exercising helps fight depression by influencing your body chemistry. It releases endorphins, which lead to a positive mood. It strengthens the immune system, which can help prevent depression from getting worse. It also elevates your temperature, which can help to relax the central nervous system (8).

13. Build a Daily Routine

When you are going through depression, it becomes more difficult to organize yourself and sometimes to make even simple decisions. Creating a schedule for yourself can be extremely helpful in this regard.

Develop a daily routine that includes [self-care](#), nourishment, and the daily activities or tasks you usually carry out. At the end of each day, make a list of goals for the next day, even if they are only simple ones at first. Try to expand this over time, according to your ability.

14. Go Outside in Nature

Spending time in nature can elevate your mood for several reasons. It allows you to be out in the sun, increasing your serotonin levels and decreasing feelings of depression (7). Additionally, it gives you a break from the technology that consumes so much of our lives every day.

Finally, many people find that [being in nature](#) gives them a relaxed, almost spiritual feeling, which allows them to consider different issues outside of the context of their lives. Try going for a hike in the woods for a mood uplift.

15. Practice Gratitude

Take a few minutes every day to think about what things in your life you are grateful for. Even better, write them down. A study published in [NeuroImage](#) found that expressing gratitude impacts neuronal activity and may decrease feelings of depression.

This was particularly true when the gratitude statements were committed to paper. The gratitude effect also had a long-term impact. It is a good way to remind yourself that there are good things in your life, and this reminder can become addictive.

Frequently Asked Questions

What is the main reason for depression? - There is no one cause for depression; it is often a combination of factors. Physical changes in the brain may be involved or a shift in brain chemicals or hormones. There is also a genetic component to **mental and emotional health**. Furthermore, life events like death or trauma can initiate depression ([9](#)).

Who has the highest chance of developing depression? - Women have a much greater chance of developing depression compared to men. The incidence is almost twice as high. Some of the reasons for this are hormonal and occur during puberty, pregnancy, and menopause. However, other societal, physical, and genetic factors have an impact on women's **mental and emotional health** ([10](#)).

Who tends to develop anxiety more, men or women? - The [Journal of Psychiatric Research](#) states that anxiety disorders are more prevalent in women than in men, although there were no differences in age of onset and length of the disorder. This was true across the span of their lifetime.

Also, they concluded that **anxiety symptoms in men** were less severe on the whole than for women. They found this to be particularly true in European American and Hispanic women.

Can anxiety and depression occur together? - Depression and anxiety can and often do occur together, although they are different conditions. Besides, they can each present as a symptom of the other disorder. The treatments for these conditions are similar in terms of medication and lifestyle changes, which can help you experience the **benefits of good mental health** ([11](#)).

What natural solutions can help anxiety? - If you are interested in learning **how to manage anxiety** naturally, you should know that it is very similar to how you would manage depression.

Ways to improve mental health include exercising more, sleeping better, lowering stress, eating well, socializing, taking care of your physical health, and maintaining communication with your physician.

Do children develop anxiety? - Yes, children can develop anxiety disorders. They also often have anxiety in response to stressful events. Unfortunately, not every child has the **benefit of good mental health** ([12](#)).

The Final Word

Depression and anxiety are serious mental health problems, which can severely limit functioning and make it difficult to carry out your responsibilities. They can also be very traumatic to experience. Even if you have **high-functioning depression and anxiety**, it may still be very hard to get through the day.

If you experience depression or anxiety, you should see your physician right away and decide on a course of treatment. Moreover, there are other **ways to improve mental health**, which are more natural lifestyle changes.

You can improve your **mental health using exercise**, a healthy diet, organic supplements, socializing with friends and family, meditation, music, or practicing the things that bring you joy. Mental health is the key to being happier and more fulfilled, so working on it is worth it.

About the Author: Veronika William is a passionate writer with expertise in health, fitness, beauty, and skincare articles. She seeks to resonate with readers through sincere and thoughtful words offered with an enthusiastic twist.

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