

What MOVES You



Anxiety, Depression, & Exercise

What is anxiety?

Anxiety is a feeling of worry, nervousness, or fear about things that might happen in the future. It's a natural emotion that everyone experiences sometimes. However, when anxiety becomes overwhelming or affects daily life, it may need attention and support to manage it effectively.

What is depression?

Depression is a mental health condition that can make you feel sad, empty, or hopeless for a long time. It's more than just feeling down occasionally; it can affect how you think, feel, and handle daily activities. People with depression may lose interest in things they used to enjoy and may need support from friends, family, or professionals to feel better.

Why is exercise important for those with anxiety and depression?

Exercise is beneficial for cancer patients with anxiety or depression because it can help improve their mood and reduce feelings of stress. Physical activity releases chemicals in the brain that can make you feel happier and more relaxed, providing a natural way to cope with emotional challenges during your cancer journey. Additionally, staying active can boost your overall well-being and support your physical health while going through treatment.

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Why is exercise important for those with anxiety and depression?

- Mood Improvement: Exercise can boost mood and reduce feelings of anxiety and depression, helping cancer patients and survivors feel better emotionally.
- Stress Reduction: Physical activity can help manage stress related to cancer and its treatment, providing a healthy coping mechanism.
- Coping Strategy: Physical activity is a healthy way to cope with the emotional challenges of cancer, complementing other forms of treatment.
- Overall Well-Being: Regular workouts may contribute to better physical health, which can positively impact overall quality of life and emotional well-being

What types of exercises help those with anxiety and/or depression?

Various types of exercises can be beneficial for people with anxiety and depression. The key is to find activities that suit individual preferences and physical abilities.

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What types of exercises help those with anxiety and/or depression?

Walking: A simple and low-impact exercise that can be done outdoors in nature, which can have additional mood-lifting benefits.

Yoga: Combines physical movement, breathing exercises, and meditation, promoting relaxation and stress reduction.

Tai Chi: Physical activity that involves slow, flowing movements and deep breathing, promoting relaxation and mindfulness.

Mindful Breathing Exercises: While not traditional exercises, deep breathing techniques and mindfulness practices can be beneficial for anxiety and stress management

Example 30-minute workout for those with anxiety and/or depression

Warm-up (5 minutes):

- March in place or perform light jogging for 2 minutes.
- Arm circles (10 forward, 10 backward).
- Shoulder rolls (10 forward, 10 backward).
- Leg swings (10 swings per leg, front to back).

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Example 30-minute workout for those with anxiety and/or depression

Cardio (10 minutes):

- Walking: Go for a brisk walk around your neighborhood or a nearby park.
- If you prefer indoor exercise, try walking in place or on a treadmill.
- Keep a steady pace, focusing on your breathing and enjoying the surroundings.

Strength and Balance (10 minutes):

- Bodyweight Squats: Stand with feet shoulder-width apart, lower into a squat, and then stand back up. Repeat 10-12 times.
- Wall Push-Ups: Stand facing a wall, place hands shoulder-width apart on the wall at chest level, and perform 10-12 push-ups.
- One-Leg Balance: Stand on one leg, holding onto a stable surface if needed. Aim for 30 seconds on each leg.
- Seated Leg Raises: Sit on a chair, straighten one leg, hold for a few seconds, and then lower. Repeat 10-12 times on each leg.

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Example 30-minute workout for those with anxiety and/or depression

Cool-down and Stretching (5 minutes):

- Deep Breathing: Sit or lie down comfortably, close your eyes, and take slow, deep breaths for 2 minutes.
- Upper Body Stretch: Gently stretch your arms overhead, reaching towards the ceiling, and hold for 15 seconds.
- Lower Body Stretch: Sit with legs extended and reach for your toes, holding for 15 seconds.
- Neck Stretch: Gently tilt your head to one side, holding for 15 seconds, and then switch to the other side.

Mindfulness (optional, 5 minutes):

- End the workout with a short mindfulness exercise. Sit quietly and focus on your breathing or listen to calming music to promote relaxation.

Remember to listen to your body and adjust the intensity of each exercise based on your comfort level. **You should always talk with a healthcare professional and a certified exercise specialist before starting any new exercise routine, especially if you have anxiety or depression issues.**