

TAKING CARE OF YOUR BRAIN:
15 THINGS YOU CAN DO TO SPEED UP YOUR RECOVERY
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In addition to psychotherapy and medication, the following are some simple things that will help speed your recovery. What they all have in common is that all of them have been shown to help the brain stay healthy, recover, regenerate neuronal cells, and support healthy neuronal function. Care for your brain! The more of these you do, the faster you are likely to feel better, and stay better.

1. Try a simple meditation 5 minutes a day or more once, twice or three times a day. In addition to help you feel more relaxed, meditation is known for reducing symptom of anxiety, anger, pain and depression. Meditation is also known for increasing neuronal regeneration and for maintaining a healthy environment for your neurons. There are numerous CD's with simple guided meditations, or you can use mine. You can also find some Podcasts to help you develop a simple daily practice.
2. Do not remain in bed or sleep for more than 8-hours a day. Over-sleeping has been shown to increase depressed feelings.
3. Get outside for at least 1/2-hour between 11 AM and 2 PM. Bright light has been shown to have an antidepressant effect. Getting outdoors even on a moderately overcast day gives you the light you require to set up your sleep-wake cycle, and to produce some Vitamin D.
4. Walk briskly, or get some other exercise for at least 30-minutes every day. Taking a walk outdoors between 11 AM and 2 PM takes care of both your need for bright light and your need for exercise, and will help balance your endorphin systems. In addition, we know that exercise not only benefits the cardiovascular and hormonal-insulin system, but also helps the regeneration of neurons in the brain.
5. Totally abstain from the use of alcohol and recreational drugs. Alcohol and street drugs both induce depression and prevent antidepressants from working effectively. Totally avoid the use of street drugs.
6. Increase the amount of Omega-3 fatty acids in your diet. There is highly suggestive evidence that increasing one's intake of EPA, one of the Omega-3 fatty acids, helps recovery from depression and increases attention in those with attention deficits. This can be done most easily by taking a supplement that contains Omega-3 fatty acids only. Make sure that the EPA content of each capsule is 600 mg. per capsule, taking up to 1800mg a day and that the brand reads "Independently tested for purity" and/or "contains no mercury or PVC's. Do NOT take preparations with omega 6 or omega 9 fatty acids. If you have any unpleasant "fishy" aftertaste or repeat fish taste, try putting these pills in the refrigerator, or take them at night. An alternative to taking fish oil based omega 3, is to take flaxseed preparations. We don't know however if they will work as well. **If you have any bleeding problems or take anticoagulants or "blood thinners" talk to your doctor before you take omega 3 fatty acids.**

7. Consider using Vitamin B supplements. Health food stores sell Vitamin B complex as B: 100's, take one a day.
8. Take Magnesium. You may use Magnesium as Magnesium Oxide 400mg a day for three weeks.
9. Avoid the use of products that contain aspartame (Equal® or NutraSweet®). It has been shown that many people with depression become more depressed when they use these products.
10. Take Vitamin D3 1000 units a day. Lifestyle has created an epidemic of low vitamin D. Vitamin D in addition to its role keeping adequate minerals (calcium) in the bones, it a major factor in the repair of DNA. Low levels of Vitamin D have been associated with all sorts of cancer risks, metabolic syndromes, depression and anxiety. Unless you sunbath daily, most of us need this crucial supplement.
11. Limit drinking beverages that contain too many sugars in any form or high fructose corn syrup. High sugar intake is not only associated with obesity, diabetes and high cholesterol, but may contribute to anxiety, attention problems, irritability, mood swings and aggressive behavior, particularly in children. Similarly, drink less carbonated drinks and avoid "energy drinks". Water with lime and agave-based sweeteners are healthier better options.
12. To reduce carbohydrate intake, switch to whole-grain or wheat-based grains instead of white-based refined starches.
13. Read the labels!! If you can't pronounce it, don't eat it! Increase the amount of whole foods you eat to limit your exposure to toxins, allergens and chemicals common in processed food, many of which are known to affect the brain. Whole foods are foods that require refrigeration and cooking and therefore are less processed.
14. Eat more green leafy vegetables or the broccoli family. These are all high in micronutrients and antioxidants needed for optimal function.
15. Eat a bowl of blueberries a day and a hand full of almonds. Blueberries and Goji berries have a significant high level of antioxidant substances. Antioxidants help clear away toxic substances associated with DNA and brain injury, and aging. Almonds will provide you with additional micronutrients and essential oils.