

# Yogic Management of **DEPRESSION**



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## DEPRESSION

Depression is a common mental disorder. Depression can result in a grave complication - suicide. Encountered in 15% of depressed population, suicide is seen as one of the leading causes for death between ages 15 and 35. Depression is said to be 4<sup>th</sup> leading contributor to the global burden. Employers lose billions of money from absenteeism and lost productivity.

Depressed mood, low self esteem and loss of interest in normally enjoyable activities if persists for a longer duration, is referred to as Major Depressive Disorder in clinical terms.

### Different forms of Depression :

**Major Depressive Disorder :** Major depression is a disabling condition which adversely affects a person's family, work or school life, sleeping, eating habits and general health.

**Dysthymic Disorder :** Dysthymia is characterized by long term but less severe symptoms of depression. People with dysthymia may also experience one or more episodes of major depression during their life time.

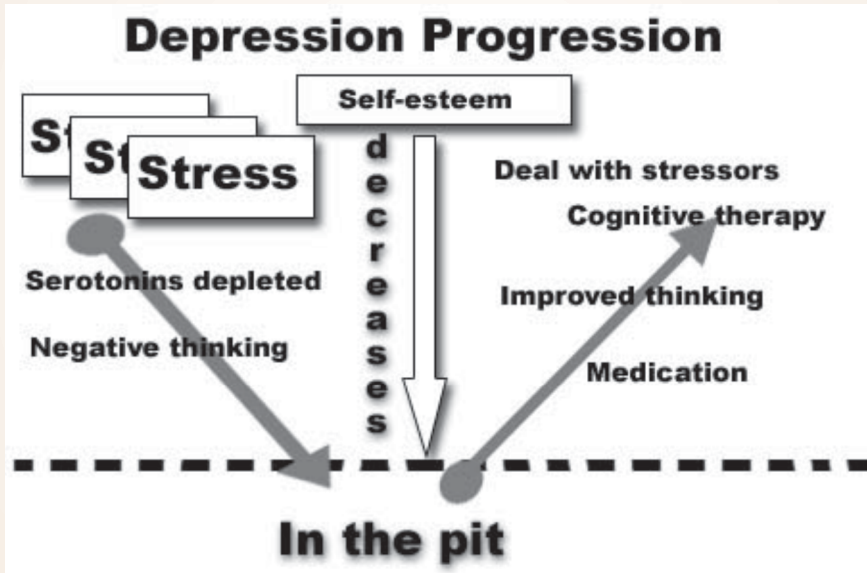
**Psychotic Depression :** This is an episode of severe depression associated with psychotic symptoms such as delusions, hallucinations which are beyond reality.

**Post Partum Depression :** Depression is seen in new mother within six weeks of delivery. Nearly 10-15% of women experience this kind of depression soon after the child birth which can lead to inconsistent child care.

**Seasonal Affective Disorder :** It is also known as *winter depression* or *winter blues*, is a mood disorder in which people who have normal mental health throughout most of the year experience depressive symptoms in the winter or less frequently, in the summer.

## Signs & Symptoms :

- Prolonged very low mood, mostly every day either reported by the patient (e.g. feels sad or empty) or as observed by others.
- Diminished interest or inability to enjoy activities most of the days, as reported by the patient or observed by other.
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- Feeling of worthlessness, inappropriate guilt or regret, helplessness, hopelessness and self-hatred.
- Diminished ability to concentrate. Poor memory, withdrawal social situations & activities, reduced interest in sex.



## Causes of Depression :

Depression has no single cause. It likely results from a combination of genetic, biochemical, environmental and psychological factors.

- **Genetic** : Research indicates that depression can run in families for generations.

- **Biochemical** : Certain neuro-transmitters namely serotonin, dopamine, acetylcholine and nor-adrenaline chemicals that brain cells use to communicate appear to be out of balance in depression. Brain imaging studies such as MRI have shown that parts of the brain responsible for regulating mood, thinking, sleep, appetite and behavior appear to function abnormally.
- **Environmental**: Trauma, loss of near and dear ones, medical illnesses or any stressful situation may trigger a depressive episode.

### Co-Existing Conditions :

Depression often co exists with other illnesses. Such illnesses may precede the depression, cause it and/or be a consequence of it.

- a) **Anxiety Disorders** : Post Traumatic Stress Disorder resulting after experiencing terrible events or ordeal such as violent assault, rape, an accident, natural disaster, terrorism, and Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
- b) **Alcohol and other substance abuse or dependence** : This is one of the most common coexisting conditions with depression.
- c) **Medical Conditions** : Depression often co-exists with serious medical conditions such as heart disease, stroke, cancer, HIV/AIDS, diabetes and Parkinson's disease.

### Management

There are some key steps you can take to lift your mood and help your recovery from depression.

- **Take your medication**: It is important to take the medications as prescribed, even if person starts to feel better. If person stops medication too soon, you could have a relapse of your depression.
- **Exercise**: It has long been known that regular exercise is good for our physical health. It can reduce the risk of cancer, heart disease and strokes. In recent years, studies have shown that regular

physical activities also has benefits for our mental health. Exercise can help people with depression and prevent them becoming depressed in the first place.

- **Diet:** Feeling down or depressed can affect both the appetite and daily routine. Some people don't feel like eating when they're depressed and are at risk of becoming underweight. Others find comfort in food and can put on excess weight. Antidepressants can also affect your appetite.

### Yogic Management :

The line of treatment should be to activate the person. The Yogic practices should focus on to develop positive thoughts and to infuse energy into the person.

**Kriyas:** Jalneti, Sutraneti, Kapalabhati

### Suryanamaskar

**Yogic sukshma Vyayama:** Medha shakti vikasaka kriya

**Yogic sthula Vyayama:** Rekhagati, Sarvangaqushti

**Yogasanas:** Pavanamuktasana, Sarvangasana, Matsyasana, Gomukhasana, Vakrasana, Bhujangasana, Dhanurasana, Makarasana, Ushtrasana, Shashankasana, Tadasana, Urdhwahstottanasana, Shavasana

**Pranayama:** Nadishodhana pranayama, Ujjayi, Bhramari and Bhastrika.

**Meditation:** Breath awareness, Om chanting.

**Note:** Yoga Nidra will be quite useful as this practice is believed to act on the subconscious level to bring about a state of homeostasis in the body and mind.

**Contraindications:** The cooling pranayamas may be avoided, as they tend to dominate the parasympathetic action.

### Tips of coping with Depression

- ❖ **Be more socially active:** Don't withdraw from life. Socialising can improve your mood. Keeping in touch with friends and family means helps to share feelings by talking to them when feeling low.
- ❖ **Exercise daily:** Take up some form of exercise. There's evidence that exercise can help lift your mood. If you haven't exercised for a while, start gently by walking for 20 minutes every day.
- ❖ **Face your fear:** Don't avoid the things you find difficult. When people feel low or anxious, they sometimes avoid talking to other people. Some people can lose their confidence about driving or travelling.
- ❖ **Do not drink too much alcohol:** for some people, alcohol can become a problem. You may drink more than usual as a way of coping with or hiding your emotions, or just to fill time. But alcohol won't help you solve your problems. It could also make you feel more depressed.
- ❖ **Have a routine :** When people feel down, they can get into poor sleep patterns, staying up late and sleeping during the day. Try to get up at your normal time and stick to your routine as much as possible. Note having a routine can affect your eating. You may stop cooking regular meals, eat snacks throughout the day instead or miss breakfast because you're still in bed.

**Disclaimer :** This literature is for general awareness about disease management through Yoga. It should not be considered as treatment prescription.

## YOGIC PRACTICES FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF DEPRESSION



Jala Neti



Sutra Neti



Tadasana



Urdhwa Hastottanasana



Suryanamaskar



Kapalabhati Kriya



Pavanamuktasana



Sarvangāsana



Matsyasana



Gomukhasana



Vakrasana



Bhujangāsana



Dhanurasana



Makarasana



Ushtrasana



Shashankasana



Setubandha Sarvangasana



Nadishodhan Pranayama



Ujjayi



Bhramari



Meditation



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