

+ Are there thinking traps to avoid, to keep clear of depression?



**Trap alert!**

### **“All or nothing” thinking**

If we find something harder than we’d like to, we may find ourselves thinking “I can’t even do that, I’m totally useless”.

But that’s usually not true at all. Things are harder than they used to be, but some skills will be just as good as ever. We don’t need to imagine things being worse than they are.



**Trap alert!**

### **“The worst will happen”**

A common thinking trap is to imagine the very worst that could happen but it’s no good to be fearful of the worst possibility. Get on doing reasonable things.

### **What tips have you got for avoiding depression?**

### **Have you seen other thinking traps to keep clear of?**

#### **Brí**

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## **Brí**

### **Depression ...**

*is it “deep-pression”, deeply pressing, or can we shrug it off?*

Depression can feel like DEEPression. It’s painful and common after brain injury. Depression actually happens to one in five people without brain injury – and to a much bigger number of us with brain injury.

Having a depressed mood can amount to **feeling low, sad, miserable, hopeless, irritable, numb, empty** – plus ...

#### **Lost interest in things used to enjoy**

Nothing seems fun any more. Things that used to be enjoyable feel like a chore. Motivation is very low.

#### **Self-criticism and guilt**

Feeling that we are bad, useless, inadequate.

#### **Pessimism**

Expecting that things will go badly rather than well.

#### **Hopelessness**

Plus there are symptoms of depression which doctors and psychologists link closely with brain injury. That’s because these can come directly from the brain injury but are then made worse by depression –

**Loss of energy** – feeling tired all the time.

**Changes in sleep patterns** – difficulty in sleeping – or feeling you could sleep all the time.

**Withdrawn** – doing hardly anything.

**Poor concentration** – harder to read, watch tv, etc.

**Memory difficulties** – particularly short-term memory problems – and the way it's easier to remember the bad things than the good things that have happened.

***What's your experience of depression?  
What are good ways to avoid depression?***

□ **Be active – a project, hobby, anything ...**

“Just doing something made me feel much better. Didn't even matter whether it was pleasant or not.

Just doing it was enough. Washing the car or fishing. Never been keen on fishing but it's won me round.”

“So my big discovery was that to go and do things got me out of the dumps. Beginning anything is the hard stage. But after getting going and looking back, it's never turned out bad.”

“The hardest thing has been spending energy when you've got none, but the energy's built up when I did more. Gardening, kite-flying, things I wouldn't believe I'd ever do.”



Exercise?

“I feel like I am a completely different person now. I have confidence back and I can do almost everything that I could before. Yes, I exercise.”

“It's a great way to get out of depression to be doing some exercise, but don't do anything that jerks your head around. Don't be doing anything that makes you feel at all unwell.”

“I like doing any exercises with the head pretty fixed in one place, stationary. I found that jogging was not at all good.”

What else is important for me ?



What can I do?

having a routine, some definite schedule

“I talk to myself, saying I can do it, I can manage”

“I keep a diary – of good things, at least 3 a day”

“I listen to music now – it gets through to me”

“take the family's support if it's there – there's nothing like it in the end”

“well, I had to see my doctor – last thing I wanted but I did get a bit of help”