

## Exercise Handout 2: Weekly exercise plan

See also [Fact Sheet: Exercise and depression](#)



Regular exercise can be an effective way to reduce symptoms of depression.

However, starting to get active when feeling depressed can be difficult. Therefore, it can be useful to start slowly and build up gradually. Setting realistic exercise goals for each week is a way of doing this that allows you to monitor your own progress and keep up your motivation.

- Choose your exercise goals for the next week, and write them in the “Weekly Exercise Plan”. Choose the types of activities to do and for how long (e.g. 3 x 20 min walks).
- Keep your exercise plan achievable and realistic– a little exercise is better than none.
- If you have not been exercising at all, you may like to start with 10-15 minute walks each morning. If you are more able, you should aim to walk for longer periods (e.g. 30 mins) and include some more vigorous exercise (e.g. swimming, jogging or cycling).
- Each week, write a new exercise plan for the upcoming week.
- Choose types of exercise that appeal to you – ones that you are likely to do and enjoy.
- Reward yourself for meeting your exercise goals.
- If you don’t meet your exercise goals, don’t beat yourself up – simply start again.

### EXAMPLE: WEEKLY EXERCISE PLAN



\_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_ minutes of \_\_\_\_\_ *walking* \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ 4 \_\_\_\_\_ times this week

\_\_\_\_\_ 20 \_\_\_\_\_ minutes of \_\_\_\_\_ *swimming (breaststroke)* \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ times this week

\_\_\_\_\_ 90 \_\_\_\_\_ minutes of \_\_\_\_\_ *yoga* \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ 1 \_\_\_\_\_ times this week

Notes: (Times that would be best for me to exercise, aims, rewards I can give myself)

*Walking - early in the morning with the dog or in my lunch break.*

*Swimming - on the weekend, do however many laps I like, get Jack to come with me*

*Yoga - go to Wednesday night beginners class, hire a DVD as my reward afterwards*

Remember to choose types of exercise that you are most likely to do and enjoy.

Consider different types of exercise, such as walking, jogging, cycling, bushwalking, gardening, swimming, surfing, yoga, tai chi, pilates, weight-lifting, resistance training, boxing, dancing, skipping, rock-climbing, aerobics classes, tennis, squash or team sports.

Or simply stick to brisk walking!

### WEEKLY EXERCISE PLAN



\_\_\_\_\_ minutes of \_\_\_\_\_, \_\_\_\_\_ times this week  
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