

## Mental Health

### Prevention

Daily physical activity leads to a 20-30% lower risk of depression ([SASA](#)).

### Treatment

If you have a mental illness, regular physical activity helps improve sleep and self esteem, whilst reducing the amount of fatigue and pain you suffer ([RCPSYCH](#)).

Exercise reduces the symptoms of mental health disorders including depression, anxiety, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder ([RCPSYCH](#)).

If you suffer from anxiety and panic attacks, exercise helps reduce your symptoms and is best used in addition to your other treatments ([FYSS](#); [Jayakody 2014](#))

If you have schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, regular physical activity improves control of your mood and reduces the negative thoughts and feelings you experience ([Cochrane 2010](#))

If you have severe mental illness, you are at higher risk of other medical problems such as heart disease. Regular exercise is a great way to counteract these risks and is available on the NHS along with dietary advice ([NICE](#)).

### Comparisons

If you have major depression, exercise is just as effective as a common medication (Sertraline) and is better for relapse rates ([Blumenthal 2007](#))

Exercise therapy and Cognitive Behavioural therapy are just as good as each other in the treatment of mild to moderate depression ([Blumenthal 2013](#); [Cochrane 2013](#))

### Advice

If you suffer from depression or anxiety, supervised group exercise sessions two or three times per week is the most effective way to exercise ([NICE](#)).

If you're on any strong medications for your mental health disorder make a big effort to avoid sitting for prolonged periods because your medications can make it hard to get up and about.

### Further resources for Healthcare Professionals

[Motivate to Move – Mental Health](#)

[FYSS - Depression](#)

[FYSS - Anxiety](#)

[FYSS - Schizophrenia](#)