

We all feel down now and again. We can feel tired or listless or just 'meh' about everything.

Feeling low or feeling down is not pleasant, but it is very common.

There's no set definition for having a low mood. It is different for everybody.

Sometimes it can be hard to pinpoint what's bothering you. It might be a combination of things that are slightly worrying or draining, so it can be difficult to identify exactly where the problem lies.

What you can do if you're feeling low

Identify the cause(s)

Make a list of what you think is, or could be, causing you to feel low. We don't always have control over all aspects of our lives. But accepting this is the first step towards recognising what we can, and cannot, control.

Talk to someone

Speaking about what's going on for you can help you to get some perspective.

Write it out

Sometimes we hold back or censor our words when we talk to other people about what's going on. Letting it all out on paper can provide a sense of relief, and sometimes a new perspective. Remind yourself that nobody ever needs to see what you've written, and let it all out onto the page or screen.

Make time for yourself

Feeling down may be your body's way of telling you it's time for a break. Think about what you did last week. Did you leave any time for yourself to unwind? Or was it full of things you felt you had to do? If we spend all our time fulfilling duties we can start to wear out.

Do more of what you enjoy

What are the things you enjoy that help you switch off? Watching TV, dancing, jigsaws, seeing friends? Losing yourself in something you enjoy helps to clear your head and give you a break from routine.

Looking after yourself

It is a frustrating paradox that there are some things that will make us feel better but we won't feel like doing when we feel low.

Exercise

When you feel low, pushing yourself physically might be the last thing on your mind, but exercise releases endorphins that can lift our mood. Try a gentle walk to get moving if you don't feel in the mood for a full work-out.

Eating well

A healthy diet can improve your sense of well-being and mood, and eating regularly will help to keep your sugar levels steady.

Get regular, quality sleep

This is essential for mental and physical health.

Try mindfulness

Learning to stop and focus on the present moment can give you a break from analysing past events and worrying about the future.

Allow yourself to feel your emotions

Remember:

- You are feeling like this for a reason
- This is just how you feel right now
- There will be good and bad days
- Make the most of the good days and on the bad days be good to yourself
- Do things that soothe and comfort you and be gentle with yourself
- You will heal faster if you show yourself kindness
- Don't scold yourself or tell yourself 'you should be over it by now'
- Be your own best friend

Jigsaw (2021) *Coping with feeling down: Advice for young people*, Available at:

<https://jigsaw.ie/feeling-down/>

Foreman, E. and Pollard, C. (2011) *CBT COGNITIVE BEHAVIOURAL THERAPY A PRACTICAL GUIDE*. St Ives plc: Clays Ltd.