

What to do if you're feeling down or low

When you are feeling down, it is useful to work out exactly what things are associated with you feeling this way.

Consider asking yourself the following questions and writing your answers below.

Are there particular days when you tend to feel down? If so, which days?

Are there particular times of the day when you tend to feel down? If so, when?

What is going on around you when you are feeling down?

(e.g. when you are near particular people, faced with particular jobs on the farm)

Are there particular thoughts going through your head when you are feeling down? If so, what are they?

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How would your life be different if you weren't feeling down? What would it look like? What would you be doing?

When you spend some time working out the types of things you are thinking when you feel down, you might notice a pattern. Often the same topics come up over and over, and go round and round in people's heads. This is called ruminating.

This diagram details how the vicious cycle of depression tends to work.



While it can be difficult to find the motivation to do the things you used to enjoy when you are feeling down, research has shown that taking action is one of the most effective ways of breaking this cycle and improving your mood. It is okay to do this gradually. The questions on the following page will help you work out exactly what to do.

What activities gave you a sense of achievement or pleasure in the past that you aren't currently doing, but are capable of? (e.g. going for a walk, riding the motorbike, gardening, playing cards)

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Which **jobs** around the farm would you feel relieved if you completed? (e.g. taking rubbish to the dump)

What **social activities** did you previously enjoy and find important, that you no longer do? (e.g. going to the footy)

Are there any **family or friends** you are now spending less time with who you could reconnect with? If so, who?

What types of **physical activity** did you previously enjoy?

Now have a look over all of the various activities listed above and choose a few (3 or 4) to try over the next week, ensuring at least one involves physical activity:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.

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It is fine to start off spending small amounts of time doing these activities in the beginning (e.g. 10 minutes in the first week) and with time, work up to spending longer (e.g. 20 minutes in the second week).

To help make it easier to do these things, **schedule a time** to do each and write these in your diary. You may then like to rate your mood /10 before and after doing each activity so you can keep track of which activities have the biggest impact on your mood. At the end of that week, look at the list again. Reschedule those activities that improved your mood, consider doing them for a bit longer next time and try a couple of new ones from your list.

It may help to **ask a friend or family member to help you** plan out the strategy above and to help you keep on track with it.

The purpose of doing this is to reverse the vicious cycle of depression, as detailed below.



If you experience the following symptoms, it is important that you discuss them with your GP or speak to someone else such as a professional **counsellor or psychologist**:

- Depressed mood
- Loss of pleasure or interest in usual activities
- Inability to concentrate
- Feelings of guilt or worthlessness
- Disturbed sleep patterns
- Fatigue or loss of energy
- Change in weight or appetite
- Slowed movements
- Restlessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide

Learning techniques in the ifarmwell modules will also help.