

LOOK TO THE FUTURE

Seeing and feeling the effects of the pandemic over the past few months has affected us all, in some way and form. For many it has had a profound effect on their mental health, therefore its important to naturally boost your serotonin levels.

What is serotonin?

Serotonin is a chemical messenger in your brain that scientists attribute to feelings of happiness and wellbeing.

How to boost serotonin levels naturally

Sunlight

Exposure to sunlight increases the brain's release of serotonin, a few minutes of bright natural sunlight each morning can help elevate mood and re-energize you to face the day.

B-Vitamins

Getting B vitamins from your diet helps maintain healthy serotonin levels.

A well-balanced diet made up of healthy foods usually provides enough to support serotonin production, everyday foods containing B vitamins include:

- Whole grains** (brown rice, barley, millet)
- Meat** (red meat, poultry, fish)
- Eggs and dairy products** (milk, cheese)
- Legumes** (beans, lentils)
- Seeds and nuts** (sunflower seeds, almonds)
- Dark, leafy vegetables** (broccoli, spinach, kale)
- Fruits** (citrus fruits, avocados, bananas)

Reducing refined sugar

Consuming a large amount of processed sugar, after the initial high your mood can suddenly drop and trigger feelings of worry, irritability, and sadness. This can be a double whammy if you are also dealing with depression or anxiety. Sugar will also make you crave food which can then leave you tired and lethargic. The ingestion of a sugar rich diet is linked to decreased serotonin metabolism.



David Fairlamb

Exercise

Exercise is proven to increase both serotonin production and release. Aerobic exercise such as running, cycling and bootcamps are the most likely to boost serotonin. Also training in groups has a real positive effect, unfortunately we have to rule groups out for now, but training with other members of your household will give you a positive boost together.

Positive Thinking

The way we think and act to situations is key to ours moods. Try to take stock of the huge loss of

life and knock on effects of the current pandemic in this country and around the world, the smaller day to day things that we used to get frustrated over, should pale into insignificance. Teach yourself to stay positive and upbeat, learn to laugh at situations rather than get angry. These calmer more level headed reactions and thoughts will make you feel better and more positive everyday.

When positive thoughts are generated, the stress hormone cortisol decreases and the brain produces serotonin, creating a feeling of well-being, calmness and emotional stability.

DAVID'S SUMMING UP

As lockdown starts to ease, its hugely important to keep yourself mentally as well as physically strong. Keep thinking positive and look to the future.