The Mental Health Miracle

Matthew Konstantin
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1. INTRODUCTION
Hello and welcome to my ebook. My name is Matthew Konstantin (pronounced Kon-stand-teen) and I thank you for your purchase. I poured all of my knowledge and experience into this thing, and I sincerely hope that it helps you on some level.

You may be aware of some of the suggestions I put forth in this ebook (although I’m confident I’ll bring at least something new to the table), or you may be like me many years ago when I thought there was no other option to mental suffering beyond prescription medication. If you’ve never explored this sort of thing before then I promise you that there are many options beyond prescription meds, and you absolutely do not need medication to be happy and healthy.

As you can see this ebook is 60 pages long, so we’re in no short supply of natural solutions. Diet alone can play such a huge role in how someone feels mentally, and it blows my mind that a doctor won’t take two seconds to ask a patient about their diet before prescribing an anti-depressant.

Anyway, first off I want to start this ebook with a little bit about myself.

1.1 My Story
I know I know… the boring “about me” section. You probably wanna get right to the good stuff, however I encourage you to read this section as you may identify with some of the things I mention.

The root of my issue is discussed a little in section 12 of this ebook, however I wanna start with my introduction to anti-depressant medications. I was 22 years old. I had suffered with anxiety for probably about 8 years at that point. The anxiety snowballed into OCD, lack of self-confidence, and eventually a pretty bad depression. After many years of suffering I finally decided to get some help and made an appointment with my family doctor.

My doctor talked to me for all of about 10 minutes before prescribing me the medication Effexor (an SNRI… Serotonin Norepinephrine Reuptake Inhibitor). I didn’t question him on this decision because I didn’t know any better and I was all too happy to take a medication which I thought it would fix my problem. He didn’t ask me about my diet, he didn’t recommend that I exercise, he didn’t check my vitamin D status, he didn’t suggest meditation, he didn’t ask one single question about my experience of my suffering… he just went straight to the meds.

This is beyond negligent behaviour for a doctor in my opinion, and is something that is happening to millions of people across the globe… not just me. To add to the negligence there was no discussion of the side-effects of the medication, nor was there any discussion of the severe withdrawal many people experience when stopping Effexor.

Anyway back to the story. So I did initially receive some help from the medication, however after a few years of use my anxiety actually got considerably worse (which can be an issue with these meds). I decided it was time to get off of Effexor and face my issues without medication. I tapered off of the meds slowly over a period of about eight months. I was doing ok until finally stopping the medication altogether, at which point my life fell apart. A depression hit me like nothing I’d ever felt before. Absolute darkness and despair. I came close to having panic attacks (which I had never experienced before in my life) because I felt like I was going to lose my mind. I got “head zaps” (feels like an electric shock passing through your head) whenever I moved my eyes. Overall it was the worst experience of my life.
Had I followed my medical doctor’s advice of halting the medication over a period of a month I probably would have killed myself. And I say that in all earnestness and not figuratively. I was told that there’s no such thing as withdrawal and that what I was experiencing was due to my need for the medication. This is a common story you will be told if you’re on medication and is absolutely NOT TRUE. Withdrawal is unquestionably real and is experienced by most people when stopping their medications.

I tried to make it without meds for a month or two, but the depression and darkness (including ongoing bouts of crying out of nowhere) was too strong for me to continue, so I started taking an SSRI (Selective Serotonin Reuptake Inhibitor, the most common type of anti-depressant) called Cipralex. I gradually crawled out of the depression over the next few weeks and eventually felt somewhat normal again after a few months.

It was over the next several years that I learned pretty much everything I lay out in this ebook. What is discussed herein allowed me to finally taper off of Cipralex and live a life free of anxiety and depression without the use of medication. It was a long and difficult journey, but I’m happy to be here and happy to hopefully help you from falling into the same trap as I did.

1.2 The Pharmaceutical Theory of Disease

I put this in here because I know many of you are in the same situation, or will be in the same situation when you visit your doctor for mental health concerns. I know all too many people who have gone through this same scenario. It’s a sad state of affairs that medications are still the “go to” for mental health because we know better. We have evidence showing that exercise is as effective as Prozac for depression yet doctors are prescribing these pills like there’s no tomorrow.

Anti-depressant use in the United States rose 400% in teens and adults between 1994 and 2008. We have so much evidence to support alternative treatments for mental health yet these medications are being used more than ever and it’s sickening. What’s even worse is that a meta-analysis (an analysis of all existing studies on a certain subject) in 2010 concluded that anti-depressants provide “minimal or non-existent” efficacy for mild to moderate depression (medications were more effective for severe depression however).

The theory goes that you have a “defect” in your brain that doesn’t allow you to produce adequate serotonin (for those of you who don’t know, serotonin is the “happy” neurotransmitter). And that’s the whole story. And guess what... they have a pill that will boost your serotonin and will fix your issue. This ebook is not about the pharmaceutical industry so I don’t want to get too deep into this. Basically just know this “brain defect” theory is horseshit and has never been proven to be true. There is no “baseline” level of serotonin. Nobody has ever measured the “correct” amount of serotonin you should have in your brain, so how in the hell can someone tell you that you’re deficient?

What we do know is that serotonin is one of the factors that makes a person happy. If you take a drug such as MDMA (ecstasy) for example you can experience tremendous happiness and pleasure. However narrowing down the human experience of being depressed to deficient levels of a single neurotransmitter is ridiculous.

Note: If you’re interested in reading more about the corruption within the pharmaceutical industry (with a focus on prescription anti-depressants) I highly recommend the book Confessions of an Rx Drug Pusher by Gwen Olson.

What’s also interesting is that a number of other factors affect the levels of neurotransmitters in your brain. Your thoughts and your feelings about yourself have a tremendous impact on how your brain works (more on
this in chapter 12). Sunlight directly affects the levels of neurotransmitters in your brain, as do a number of nutrients which your body requires to produce these neurotransmitters in the first place. And so on and so on.

What I’m trying to say here is that the pharmaceutical model of depression is ludicrous. They want you to think that there’s something wrong with you (which I promise is not true of anyone reading this) and that they can fix you. Although serotonin may be part of the story, we know serotonin can be boosted naturally through a number of methods (adequate nutrition, supplements, sunlight, exercise etc.), as well as the fact that mood and well-being is certainly not only dependent on serotonin. Testosterone in men for example is associated with mood and confidence. Dopamine is associated with confidence and pleasure. GABA (a neurotransmitter) is calming, endorphins (released when we exercise) make us feel good, and so on and so on.

So, hopefully I’ve adequately established the fact here that medications are not the only option (and are not necessary) to treat anxiety and depression. Before getting into the meat of the ebook however I want to say a few more things about prescription meds.

2. NUTRITION

Nutrition is one of the cornerstones of health. I probably don’t need to ramble on about how a proper diet is essential for the optimal health of your body and mind, so I won’t. Basically: if you’re eating like crap, you’re probably going to feel like crap. It can be a little trickier than this for some people however. You may have a really solid diet but not realize that certain foods you’re eating are contributing to your anxiety or depression. We’ll get into this below.

Ok so... when it comes to nutrition we want to focus on two main things:

1) Minimizing inflammation
2) Food sensitivities (linked to inflammation and poor absorption of nutrients)

I’ll also have a “general recommendations/summary” section at the end.

2.1 Preface

Before starting this section I want to say that these are general guidelines. Don’t think that to feel good you have to follow these rules 100%, because that is likely not true. Sometimes the anxiety of “I have to eat this or I won’t feel good”, or “I can’t eat this or I won’t feel good” can be more destructive than letting go and breaking the rules sometimes. A good guideline to follow is the 80:20 rule... that is to say you eat well 80% of the time, and
allow yourself to cheat 20% of the time. You may have to experiment with this to see exactly what works for you. Perhaps you can get away with 70:30, or maybe you need to move up to 90:10... everyone is different.

So let’s begin.

2.2 Inflammation

Chronic inflammation is at the root of nearly all “non-communicable” diseases, i.e. diseases that aren’t caused by infectious bacteria or viruses. That is to say that inflammation is a key feature in virtually all modern diseases such as heart disease (and other vascular diseases), cancer, diabetes, auto-immune diseases, chronic pain, etc. Research within the past few years has also shown that inflammation is linked to mental suffering, such as anxiety and depression. As you can imagine when we have chronic low-level inflammation in the brain it’s likely going to hinder our brain’s ability to function properly. Research linking mental suffering with inflammation is a hot topic, and growing evidence is building a stronger and stronger association between the two.

In today’s world we have a massive selection of pro-inflammatory foods which are all too easy and too tasty for many people to avoid. Minimizing these foods, as well as consuming foods which counter inflammation can have a significant impact on our mental health.

The most prolific inflammation-causing foods are: sugar, vegetable oils, and trans-fats. Let’s start with sugar.

2.2.1 Sugar

I put sugar as #1 on the list because it is so ubiquitous in the modern diet, and because it is a totally unnecessary food to consume. Yes our bodies use glucose to produce needed usable energy, however we can get glucose from other food sources such as complex carbohydrates, which do not have the same inflammatory effect.

Moreover the spike and drop in blood sugar caused by sugar consumption can also affect mood (this is more likely to affect anxiety rather than depression). Other effects of sugar include potentiating the growth of opportunistic bacteria in our gut, lowering testosterone in men, and suppressing immune function, all of which can affect our mental health (we will discuss the impact of the gut on mental health in more detail later).

The average American consumes about 100 POUNDS of sugar per year. This is a staggering amount of sugar when you consider that the amount was half of this one hundred years ago, and one tenth of this a few hundred years ago.

So how do we avoid/minimize sugar? This one is easy enough... basically avoid sugary foods and drinks. In particular, many people probably don’t realize the huge amount of sugar that is packed into drinks such as soda and coffee (not actual coffee, but a flavoured coffee you might get at a place like Starbucks).

One can of Coca-cola contains 39 grams of sugar. Drinking one can of Coke per day would have you consuming about 31 pounds of sugar per year, and that’s not counting any other sources of sugar in your diet. A medium Java Chip Frappuccino at Starbucks contains 66 grams of sugar.

A 12 oz glass of orange juice (the same size as a can of Coke) contains 28 grams of sugar. If you’re a juice drinker you may be consuming way more sugar than you think you are. Now fruit itself can contain high amounts of sugar, however much less than a glass of fruit juice. For example a single orange only contains 9 grams of sugar, and moreover the orange (as well as other fruits) contain fiber which help to slow the entrance of sugar into your blood. Fiber also has other benefits which we’ll get into later.
I probably don’t need to name these, but other sources of sugar include sports drinks, cookies, cakes, pies, sugar cereals, etc. etc. Another hidden source of sugar is fast food or pre-made products in the grocery store. Example: a Big Mac contains 9 grams of added sugar. Pre-packaged foods such as yogurt, sauces, granola, soups, protein bars, etc. can also have tons of sugar added to them, so be sure to check labels.

**Note:** if you’re interested in learning more about the devastating effects of sugar I’d highly recommend the book *Pure, White and Deadly*, as well as the documentary *The Truth About Sugar* (free on youtube).

### 2.2.2 Vegetable Oil and Trans-Fats

Although it sounds healthy (i.e. VEGETABLE oil), it is highly inflammatory, and a hidden ingredient in many packaged foods. Moreover it is not something that most people realize is bad for them.

When I refer to vegetable oils I am talking about the following: anything called “vegetable” oil, corn oil, canola oil, peanut oil, sunflower oil, soybean oil, safflower oil, cottonseed oil. All of these oils contain high amounts of **omega 6 fatty acids**.

In short, omega 6 fats are precursors to a number of molecules in our body which are pro-inflammatory. On the other hand, omega 3 fats are precursors to **anti-inflammatory** molecules. Historically the levels of omega 6 to omega 3 fats have been consumed in the ratio of about 1:1 to 4:1, i.e. for every 4 grams of omega 6 fat consumed one gram of omega 3 fat was consumed. In the modern Western diet these levels can be **20:1 or higher**. So what we want to do essentially is minimize our consumption of omega 6 fatty acids.

**Note:** Omega 6 fatty acids are actually essential to life, most people are simply consuming way too much of them.

The main source of these oils is going to be anything processed or packaged in the grocery store, i.e. chips, cookies, salad dressings, fast food, etc. Peanuts are also high in omega 6 fats. In particular you want to avoid anything deep-fried as these foods are drenched in this type of oil. Also when cooking at home (or making salad dressings, etc.) use oils/fats such as coconut oil, olive oil, fish oil, and butter. Yes butter. Butter and other healthy fats have been demonized over the past 50 years for no good reason. We will discuss this in more detail further down.

Trans-fats are a man-made fat (other than being naturally present in milk and some dairy products) which are overall terrible for you (in particular for your heart) as well as being inflammatory. Trans-fats are made when oils are hydrogenated (i.e. a hydrogen atom is added to a non-trans-fat). Sources of trans-fats include anything that has “hydrogenated” in the ingredients list, so be sure to check labels. One major source of trans-fats is margarine. If you use margarine switch to butter, coconut oil, or olive oil.

Another way trans-fats are created is super-heating oil, i.e. deep-frying. Basically avoid anything deep fried.

### 2.2.3 Alcohol

A quick note on alcohol before finishing this section. Alcohol *in moderation* (the equivalent of about one glass of wine or one beer per day) has been shown to be beneficial to overall health and inflammation. Chronic alcohol use in excess of this amount (or binge drinking) is generally harmful.
2.3 Food Sensitivities

I want to keep talking about what to avoid before getting to what you actually should eat. On that subject let’s get to food sensitivities.

Having a food sensitivity can seriously affect your mental health, and can contribute significantly to your suffering. Food sensitivities can create all sorts of problems such as head fog, anxiety, depression, fatigue, bloating, irritable bowel syndrome, etc. Eliminating foods that your body doesn’t agree with can have a big impact on how you feel.

I want to note here that just because you may not have digestive symptoms does not necessarily mean you don’t have a food sensitivity. This topic is definitely still worth looking into even if you don’t have the typical symptoms of a food sensitivity such as abdominal pain, bloating, diarrhea, etc.

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Full Nutrition Section Available Upon Purchase

4. SLEEP

Proper and adequate sleep is crucial for mental and physical health. Studies have shown the significant effect of sleep deprivation on disrupting or heightening emotions, as well as the relation between lack of sleep and conditions such as anxiety and depression.

A study in 2014 showed that some people may start to experience symptoms of psychosis after being awake for only 24 hours. I won’t ramble on any more about this because you’ve probably heard of the importance of sleep a million times by now. Basically in conclusion: proper sleep is essential to optimal mental functioning, far more than you may think.

As I stated above, there is a link between poor sleep and mental disorders. This raises the question however of which comes first... the mental disorder or the poor sleep? Does your mood suffer because you don’t sleep properly, or do you have trouble sleeping because of issues with mood? Do you over-sleep because you are depressed, or are you feeling depressed because you’re oversleeping?

Personally I feel that this goes both ways. For example someone has anxiety and lies in bed at night with a racing mind and can’t fall asleep for several hours. They end up getting 5 hours sleep instead of 8. The lack of sleep exacerbates this person’s anxiety, which in turn effects sleep quality even more.
I totally empathize with this because I’ve had major issues with sleep in the past. I would often oversleep due to low mood or severe trouble getting out of bed in the morning. Sleeping 10 - 12 hours would leave me feeling foggy all day, which would make my anxiety worse and would push my bed time back later and later to the point where I would wake up at 2 to 4 pm (and let me tell you, waking up at 4 pm is not conducive to a good mood).

Moreover this late bed time would result in a severe lack of sleep on days where I had to get up early, which would also significantly affect my anxiety. It was a bit of a rollercoaster and something I struggled with for a years.

Anyway enough about me. So what can we do about it? Our mood isn’t particularly great, so how are we supposed to sleep properly? Well there are a number of steps we can take (as well as a few supplements) to ensure we get adequate sleep. Moreover following the tips in the rest of this guide can have a significant improvement on your mood, which on their own can directly improve your sleep.

Ok so let’s get to it. I’m sure you’ve heard some of these before, but I encourage you to read the whole list because there may be a couple tips you haven’t heard of.

4.1 Sleep Hygiene

Sleep hygiene involves certain practices or habits you follow daily which help promote optimal sleep. I’ll list them here and then cover each briefly afterwards.

1) Go to bed and wake up at the same time every day
2) Go to bed before midnight
3) Avoid stimulants near bed time
4) Avoid doing anything in bed other than sleeping or having sex

4.1.1 Sleep/Wake Cycle

So first off, going to bed and waking up at the same time every day is incredibly important. This is probably the most important tip here yet the most difficult to follow for some people. Our bodies love routine and will fall into the habit of getting tired and waking up at the same time if you follow the same sleep/wake pattern for a period of time.

Personally when I don’t follow this pattern my body doesn’t know what the hell is going on. Getting out of bed can be extremely difficult because my body doesn’t know whether it’s time to get up or keep sleeping. When I have a schedule down pat however I tend to wake up near the time my alarm goes off, and the morning fatigue is pretty much eliminated.

I know from experience that this is really tough to get down, but I urge you to put some effort into it. You’re more likely to be able to fall asleep, to stay asleep throughout the night, and to be able to get up in the morning if you follow this rule. If you can’t get out of bed in the morning then put an extra alarm across the room to force yourself to get up. If you’re browsing facebook for “just another minute” (which usually ends up being far longer) before bed then force yourself to put your phone down and go to bed at your set time.

Keeping sleep and wake times constant helps keep our circadian rhythm consistent. Our circadian rhythm is essentially your body’s internal mechanism of keeping time. It is not only involved in sleep, but in the release and control of many physiological molecules in your body, some of which are directly related to mood. If you’re interested in learning a little bit more, check out this 4 minute video on the topic:
Circadian Rhythm and Your Brain's Clock

Understandably this is also difficult to follow on the weekends because you may want to stay out late or sleep in. I’d still however recommend trying to keep bed time and wake up time within 2 hours of your normal routine so you don’t confuse your body too much on a weekly basis.

4.2 Blue Light Filters

Back to the SCN. The SCN is stimulated by light. This light triggers the SCN to shut down the production of melatonin, which makes us sleepy. So constant light = lower levels of melatonin = less sleepy.

Now understandably you’re not gonna sit in the dark for several hours once the sun goes down. While this would probably be ideal for sleep, it’s totally impractical. There is however one source of light which we can avoid… blue light.

Blue light is particularly stimulating to the SCN. Think blue = sky = daytime… this is the message your brain is getting. Stimulation by blue light near bed time can not only make it harder for us to fall asleep, but also decrease the quality of our sleep.

So, what are light sources high in blue light? Your computer, your phone, and your TV. These sources are all very high in blue light and stimulating to the brain. Again, living in the modern world you’re probably not going to avoid all of these after dark. So what can you do? Install a blue light filter on your phone and computer.

I use f.lux for my computer which works amazingly well. It consumes a minimal amount of computer resources and is very effective. Moreover f.lux actually reduces or eliminates blue light from the light source, rather than simply superimposing a red tint to the screen like some other blue light filters do. You can set f.lux to run only at night, but I keep it at the same setting (2700K) day and night. It does produce a red tint to your computer screen, however I’ve come to like the look of the red much better than the usual blue tint the screen has.

As a trial install f.lux and leave it on for an hour at 2700K at night. Now disable it briefly and see how ridiculously glaring the blue light is. The difference to me is staggering. Now imagine that light hitting your eyes for several hours before bed.

I use f.lux for my phone (Android) as well, however f.lux requires you to root your phone (have special permissions) for it to work. If your phone isn’t rooted then you’ll have to use another app.
Unfortunately I don’t know of any of these apps for TV’s (maybe there are new smart TV apps out there though, I don’t know). One option is to sit far away from the TV, or another option would be to get a pair of [blue light filtering glasses] which you can wear all night or just in front of the TV.

**Note:** Natural sources of light such as candles are much lower in blue light than synthetic sources. Incandescent bulbs are also fairly low in blue light compared to LED’s and fluorescent bulbs which are very high in blue light.

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### 5. ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION SUPPLEMENTS

#### 5.1 Why Supplements and Not Medication?

So I’ve written some pretty scathing stuff about traditional anti-depressants in our introduction, but am now discussing a variety of supplements. So what’s the difference here? Why are supplements ok but medications aren’t? Why just switch one pill out (medication) to bring another one (supplement) in?

Well we’ve gone into a list of the negatives of medications in the introduction so let’s compare that list to supplements.

First off certain supplements mentioned here are nutrients required by the body to function normally. These are *nutrients your brain and body need*, and deficiencies can cause exacerbation of your anxiety or depression. None of such supplements are going to cause any problems associated with medications unless taken in massive doses, so I don’t think there’s much more of a comparison required here.

Now however we have supplements such as 5-HTP, SAMe, as well as a variety of herbs such as St. John’s Wort, rhodiola, etc. etc. These are not nutrients required by the body, so why are they better than medications. First of all the side-effects of many such supplements are non-existent or much milder than anti-depressant or anti-anxiety medications. That’s not to say that there are no side-effects whatsoever to some of these supplements, however they mostly pale in comparison regarding the number of side-effects as well as severity (assuming you stay within the safe dosage range). I’ve tried almost every supplement on this list at one time or another and can’t say I’ve ever experienced any real noticeable side-effect.

Withdrawal for most of these supplements is also negligible. This is a *major* plus I can attest to personally because I’ve experienced the horrors of medication withdrawal. In stopping a herb like passion flower or
rhodiola you’ll notice that you no longer benefit from the herb, however there is no actual physiological withdrawal your body goes through when stopping the supplement.

This may be a bit of a different story in supplements which affect serotonin such as...

5.2 Essential Supplements

I want to start with two essential nutrients for mental health which many people are deficient in: vitamin D and vitamin B₁₂.

5.2.1 Vitamin D

The active form of vitamin D regulates at least 1000 different genes, governing nearly every tissue in the body. Vitamin D is essential to the proper functioning of our immune system, brain development, absorption of calcium, muscular function, and so on. Moreover low levels of this vitamin have been linked to depression.

As you probably know, we get vitamin D (mainly) by being exposed to sunlight (sunlight triggers the conversion of a vitamin D precursor in our skin into the bioactive form of vitamin D), as well from certain foods. The problem is many of us – particularly those of us living above a certain latitude – don’t get nearly enough sunlight to bring our blood levels of vitamin D to optimal levels. If you’re living in Canada (like me), or any location where the sun isn’t strong year round, it’s going to be basically impossible to have adequate levels of vitamin D no matter how much sun you get even if you’re outdoors all day.

Before jumping right into supplementing with vitamin D you should get your levels checked. If you live in a sunny area and get a lot of sun or eat a lot of animal liver then your levels may be fine, and we don’t want to over-supplement with vitamin D (due to the possibility of vitamin D toxicity). The range for serum (blood) vitamin D is 75 - 250 nmol/L. As with many of these blood values the bottom end of this range is simply too low. Current research is showing optimal levels of vitamin D to be somewhere between 100 - 125 nmol/L. If you’re below this then supplementing with vitamin D is a good idea.

The form you’re going to want to take is Vitamin D₃ (also known as cholecalciferol). You can start with 1000 IU per day and retest your serum levels a few months later to see where you’re at. Depending on your level of sun exposure, you’re likely going to require about 2000 - 3000 IU per day to get your levels in the optimal range. In particular if you’re a darker skinned person you will need a higher dose to bring your levels up to optimal. If after a few months you’re still below optimal, up your dose by 1000 IU and retest again in a few months. Also make
sure to take your vitamin D with food, in particular with fat. Vitamin D is fat soluble and requires fat to be absorbed properly.

Here’s a quality vitamin D supplement.

Note: Sunlight itself (irrespective of its effect on vitamin D levels) is incredibly important and is something which is discussed further in section 6.

5.2.2 Vitamin B₁₂

Vitamin B₁₂ is another common deficiency which can have profound effects on mood and mental functioning. Vitamin B₁₂ is required for proper health and maintenance of your nervous system, for metabolizing our food, and for producing red blood cells.

If you eat red meat regularly then your levels of B₁₂ are probably ok, however I would still recommend testing. B₁₂ is a large molecule and inflammation in the gut can prevent its absorption, so certain gut issues can cause a deficiency in B₁₂.

Note: When taking Cipralex I got my B₁₂ levels tested and was at the absolute low end of the range. This is odd because I eat red meat regularly and should not have been deficient in B₁₂. I think it’s possible that there’s a link between anti-depressant medications and B₁₂ deficiency, however I can’t confirm this. Either way supplementing with sublingual B₁₂ helped me quite a bit.

The range of serum B₁₂ is between about 200 - 700 pmol/L. As with vitamin D, the lower end of this range is definitely not adequate... you want to be more towards the middle or upper range (400 - 700 pmol/L). Luckily vitamin B₁₂ is super cheap and easy to supplement with.

The best form for supplementation is sublingual methylcobalamin. Do not use cyanocobalamin or hydroxocobalamin as they are not absorbed by the body very well. If you get your serum levels tested and your medical doctor suggests either of these forms, still get methylcobalamin. Also make sure you get sublingual methylcobalamin. Sublingual just means “under the tongue”.

Sublingual B₁₂ is great because it is absorbed directly into your bloodstream and doesn’t not need to be absorbed through the gut. This ensures that you’re getting it into your body properly. Simply put the tablet under your tongue and let it dissolve for 30 seconds for a minute and you’re good.

Dose depends on exactly how deficient you are. For most people 1000 mcg (micrograms) of methylcobalamin once per week (not per day) is likely enough to get your levels to a good place. If your levels are very low then you may want to up that to 5000 mcg/week.

The good thing about vitamin B₁₂ is that it is non-toxic in excessive amounts (unlike almost all other vitamins) so you don’t really need to worry about taking too much. Still, get your levels re-tested a few months after supplementing to see where you’re at.

Here is a quality B₁₂ supplement. This supplement should last you over a year.
5.3 All Other Supplements

This is going to be a long list. I’ve compiled a list of the most common and effective supplements for mental health, and will list them in order from most to least effective in terms or historical use, as well as evidence based on research. Some supplements will be for anxiety, while some will be for depression, and some for both.

St. John’s Wort

You’ve probably heard of St. John’s Wort, and for good reason… it has been used for mood disorders extensively as a traditional medicine, and moreover it has a decent amount of research which backs up its efficacy. St. John’s Wort is basically your natural alternative to an SSRI as it has been shown to naturally boost serotonin production and help with mood.

A double-blind placebo controlled trial in 2007 demonstrated St. John’s Wort to be as effective as Paxil for the treatment of moderate or severe depression. For those of you who don’t know Paxil is one of the most prescribed anti-depressant medications in history, and as we’ve discussed above it is also one of the most devastating medications to try to come off of.

St. John’s Wort on the other hand is much gentler and has a fraction of the withdrawal you would experience from Paxil. We’ve discussed the pitfalls of psychoactive medications previously, however I just wanted to reiterate that for me this is ample reason to choose St. John’s Wort over a prescription SSRI any day, at least as a first resort.

This is a great St. John’s Wort supplement. It’s a quality product at an effective dose. Anywhere from one to three capsules per day can be effective depending on your level of depression.

Note: I would not recommend taking St. John’s Wort while taking another anti-depressant... in particular SSRI’s or SNRI’s. There is a danger of taking St. John’s Wort with these medications due to the fact that they all increase available serotonin. Excess serotonin can cause something called “serotonin syndrome” which can results in mild to severe symptoms. Due to the fact that many doctors prescribe multiple anti-depressants to their patients I think this is unlikely, however for your safety I have to advise caution. Personally I have used St. John’s Wort in the past for help with tapering off Cipralex with good results... but as I said above results may vary.

Similar Note: St. John’s Wort is known to interact with many medications (not just psychoactive medications). If you’re on any medications be sure to check its safety with what you’re taking. Additionally St. John’s Wort may cause some slight photosensitivity (sensitive eyes and skin to sunlight), however I never noticed this.
Acetyl-L-Carnitine

L-carnitine is an endogenous (made in the body) molecule involved in the metabolism of fat for energy, neurotransmitter regulation, and neuroplasticity (the brain’s ability to grow new neural pathways). Acetyl-L-carnitine is simply L-carnitine with an “acetyl” group attached to it, which allows it to cross the Blood Brain Barrier (BBB).

Note: The BBB is a tightly controlled barrier around the brain which is very “selective” in terms of which substances it allows into the brain.

There is a fair amount of research demonstrating L-carnitine’s promise in treating depression and anxiety, apparently due to its action of neuroplasticity and neurotransmitter regulation. A couple of recent studies showed that it was as effective as Prozac for mild depression with none of the side-effects. Additionally there are some studies showing some positive effect on chronic fatigue.

If I were you I would give this stuff a try due to the fact that it is a nutrient the body uses, it’s cheap, and it has no potential side-effects. It can be used safely in combination with other supplements you decide to use.

Effective dose for depression or anxiety is 1 g per day up to 3 g.

Here’s a quality acetyl-L-carnitine supplement.

6. LIGHT

We’ve talked about the benefits of avoiding certain types of light in our sleep section, now let’s talk about the positive impact of certain types of light on mood.

6.1 Sunlight

Easy and free... I highly suggest getting a good dose of sunlight every day.

Many of us know that sunlight is essential to the production of vitamin D in our bodies, however vitamin D is not the only reason we need sunlight, i.e. if you’re supplementing with vitamin D you should still make an effort to get sunlight directly on your body every day.
Now you’ve probably heard a billion times “stay out of the sun”, “wear your sunscreen”, etc. etc. I just want to make the distinction here that there is a massive difference between staying out in the direct sunlight for hours and hours vs. 15 to 30 minutes of sun exposure per day. For sure if you’re going to be in the sun for hours at a time – especially in an area where the sun is strong (i.e. in the South or near the equator) – then you should make an effort to limit your exposure and wear your sunscreen. Sunlight can definitely be damaging in high amounts, however some amount of sunlight is essential to health.

So… irrespective of vitamin D sunlight is responsible for (or has been linked to) regulating your circadian rhythm (discussed in the sleep section above), protection from cancer, heart health, improved mood, improved brain function, proper development of the eyes, etc. etc.

With respect to this ebook sunlight has been shown to increase levels of both serotonin and dopamine in the brain, both of which can be involved in depression. Some people know all too well the depression that hits when winter comes and sunlight intensity and exposure diminishes, i.e. seasonal affective disorder (SAD).

So what do you do? Basically go outside and get 15 to 30 minutes of sun exposure daily without wearing sunscreen. If you’re very fair skinned or you burn easily then you may want to decrease this amount. You definitely do not want to get an amount of sun that gives you a sunburn.

Now of course this is difficult in perpetually cloudy areas or in areas with frigid winters. Even if you live in these areas you should still make an effort to get outside. While the light may not be intense it is still there and is having some effect. Moreover light sends signals to your brain through your eyeballs (but don’t look directly at the sun!), so it is not 100% necessary that the sun touches your skin (although at least some skin contact is preferred).

If you’re living in one of these areas (or say if you have a job that keeps you inside all day) then you may want to consider getting a sun lamp. These can be especially beneficial to those with SAD, but can be effective even if you don’t have SAD.

I use the HappyLight by Verilux, however there are many others on amazon in varying degrees of power and price range.

Full Light Section Available Upon Purchase
7. MINDFULNESS AND MEDITATION

Although mindfulness and meditation are two different things I’ve grouped them together because they’re often recommended together. Both are becoming a bit of a fad nowadays, however they’re both legitimate tools and effective for a multitude of conditions such as anxiety, depression, lowering stress, lowering blood pressure, and so on. Let’s start with mindfulness...

7.1 Mindfulness

To me mindfulness has two components to it:

1) Living in the moment
2) Being mindful of your thoughts

7.1.1 Living in the Moment

Living in the moment is really the overall goal of mindfulness, and being mindful of your thoughts essentially helps to facilitate number one. So yes, mindfulness is essentially all about living in the moment. So what does that mean? Living in the moment means experiencing each moment of life purely as it happens. It means immersing yourself in life without the extraneous thoughts that surround most people’s days. You’re letting go of living within yourself to living as yourself, and in doing so letting go of the anxiety or depression that is holding you down.

7.2 Meditation

Meditation is fantastic. Loads of studies exist on meditation showing its efficacy on mood, anxiety, creativity, stress, blood pressure, and so on. Essentially it is a tool to improve your overall life, however its benefits on depression and anxiety alone can be significant.

Meditation can be used alone to increase your ability to live in the moment. Meditation is very calming for the mind and facilitates this aspect of mindfulness, which is why meditation and mindfulness are often recommended together. You don’t have to consciously practice both mindfulness and meditation. If you’re not interested in mindfulness then just meditate, however I would recommend giving both a go.

Important: In order to benefit from meditation you need to do it every day. Meditation isn’t something you do once in a while and all of a sudden you feel better. Sure you might feel a little calmer after meditating, but to fully benefit from meditation you need to practice it every day... the benefits of meditation accrue over time. A
The general rule is to meditate twice a day, 20 minutes each time. I understand this is a lot to fit into one day every day, so aim for at least once per day for 20 minutes. To make it easier on yourself schedule a time when you’re going to meditate daily. An ideal time – and a great way to start the day – is to meditate as soon as you wake up.

There are many types of meditation, however in this ebook we will only focus on two...

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8. EXERCISE

As with many other things in this ebook exercise is crucial not only for physical health, but for mental health as well. Regular exercise is conducive to improved mood, longer lifespan, lower rates of heart disease and cancer, etc. etc. There are many different reasons why exercise may improve mood such as releasing endorphins (feel good hormones secreted in the brain), improving circulation, boosting testosterone in men, “burning off” anxious energy, etc. etc. Moreover exercise has been shown to directly boost serotonin in the brain.

With respect to mood, a study completed in 1999 found that cardiovascular exercise three times per week was as effective as Zoloft for major depressive disorder. That’s Zoloft, one of the most prescribed anti-depressant medications in history. Moreover the study focused on major depression, not mild or even moderate depression. These are pretty major results for something as simple as exercise. And that’s not even exercise every day... just three times per week! This particular study focused on cardiovascular exercise at 70 - 85% of participants’ maximum heart rate.

Anyway, that’s just one single study. Many other studies exist showing the benefits of exercise on both anxiety and depression. Also, while cardio may be ideal it does not have to be your choice of exercise. I hate cardio so I understand if you don’t want to jog for 40 minutes a day.

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THE REMAINDER OF THE MENTAL HEALTH MIRACLE IS AVAILABLE AFTER PURCHASE, INCLUDING THE COMPLETED SECTIONS ABOVE AS WELL AS FIVE ALL NEW SECTIONS

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Matthew Konstantin