



THIRD WAVE

YOUR ULTIMATE GUIDE TO MICRODOSING FOR DEPRESSION

Everything you need to know about safely using microdosing to help relieve symptoms of depression.



*This guide is for educational purposes only and not intended as medical advice.
If you have a serious clinical condition, please consult a mental health professional.*

▶ WHAT IS A MICRODOSE?

A microdose is a small, sub-perceptual dose of a psychedelic medicine. The two most common substances used for microdosing are LSD and psilocybin mushrooms.



Microdose of LSD:

8-12 micrograms

[See more on how to prepare LSD here](#)



Microdose of psilocybin Mushrooms:

0.1 - 0.3 grams dried mushrooms

[See more on how to prepare psilocybin for microdosing here](#)

▶ WHY MICRODOSE?

A high dose of psychedelics can be destabilizing for some individuals. A microdose is sub-perceptual — it is not what many would consider a “trip” and you will not feel “high”. It is a low-risk approach you can integrate into daily life.

▶ THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MICRODOSING LSD AND PSILOCYBIN



LSD: Generally more energizing and motivating. It gives a gentle, uplifting boost and can help people with depression get out of the “hole” they may find themselves in.



Psilocybin: Generally makes you feel more connected and grounded. Many find it better for anxiety and emotional healing.

▶ HOW DOES MICRODOSING WORK?

In daily life, we have a “default mode” we use to engage the world. It is made of several interconnected areas in the brain. Neuroscientists call this “**Default Mode Network**” or DMN. This is your brain’s network of habits, thought patterns, and unconscious beliefs.

Bestselling author Michael Pollan uses the metaphor of ski tracks: Our mind often gets stuck in the deep ruts of old ski tracks. We think the same thoughts, repeat the same actions, and can’t see solutions to our problems.

Psychedelic medicines give your mind a “fresh layer of snow”. This gives you the freedom to go in new directions and create new, more positive “tracks” in your brain.

▶ WHAT DOES MICRODOSING DO FOR DEPRESSION?

At the root of many cases of depression is a phenomenon known as “rumination”. Rumination is a negative mental-emotional loop that does not turn off. New studies show that, when the DMN is overactive, rumination and repetitive thought loops ramp up.¹

Most conventional pharmaceuticals numb difficult emotions. **Psychedelics lower activity of the DMN^{2,3}**. They turn down the volume of the thought patterns at the source of depression.

With time, microdosing allows you to choose new thoughts, new emotions, and new behaviors; it can give you the space to restore mental and emotional balance.

There are no clinical studies on microdosing and depression. However, there is compelling data. Pioneering researcher Dr. James Fadiman⁴ collected self-reported microdosing data for over 10 years. The most common benefits were reduced symptoms of depression and anxiety.

Another study that followed 1,181 microdosers⁵ for six weeks found significant decreases in depression, neuroticism, stress, and “mind wandering”.

▶ THE RISKS

While there is no definitive clinical data, **microdosing appears to have few risks**. However, in cases of serious mental illness, microdosing could have unpredictable, adverse effects. We do not recommend microdosing if you have a history of schizophrenia, psychosis, bipolar disorder, or severe anxiety.

▶ GENERAL GUIDELINES FOR MICRODOSING



INTENTION: Psychedelics tend to amplify what you focus on. When you create a clear intention, you prime yourself to experience positive results.



SET AND SETTING: Create a relaxed, comfortable environment for yourself. This includes your physical, social, and internal environments. Microdosing in a poor environment or an upset state can lead to a negative experience. Take care and choose the situations in which you microdose.



LESS IS MORE: You shouldn't feel "high" when you microdose. Higher doses can temporarily increase symptoms of anxiety and mental disturbance.



START LOW AND GO SLOW: Finding what works for you is a process of discovery and refinement. Start with low doses and slowly increase to find your optimal dose.



TIMING: It is best to microdose in the morning because it can disturb your sleep patterns. Microdose no more than 2-3x per week with at least two days between doses. This way, you can observe the effects and avoid building up a tolerance.



TAKE BREAKS: Every 6-8 weeks, take a break from microdosing. Assess how things have shifted since you started. This also helps prevent becoming psychologically dependent on it to "feel good".

▶ GOING DEEPER WITH MICRODOSING

Microdosing for depression can be life-changing. But there is much more to getting sustainable results than a simple guide.

Microdosing is a tool, not a magic pill. Like any tool, you can use it skillfully or carelessly. As with many things, the best way to get meaningful results is with expert guidance.

If you would like to take your microdosing journey to the next level, we invite you to check out the [Third Wave Microdosing Course](#) here.

You'll get a step-by-step, science-based guide to your first 30 days of microdosing specific to depression and other clinical conditions, along with in depth-videos, integration techniques, interviews with psychedelic therapists, and much more.

Dive deeper with Third Wave's Microdosing Course



Sources:

1. Rumination and the default mode network: Meta-analysis of brain imaging studies and implications for depression., Zhaou, et al., 2020.
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S105381191930878X>
2. Finding the self by losing the self: Neural correlates of ego-dissolution under psilocybin., <https://pubmed.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/26010878/>
3. Psychedelics, Meditation, and Self Consciousness, Milliere, et al., 2019.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6137697/>
4. James Fadiman, The Psychedelic Explorers Guide, 2011.
5. A systematic study of microdosing. Polito, V, 2019.
<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC6364961>



THIRD WAVE