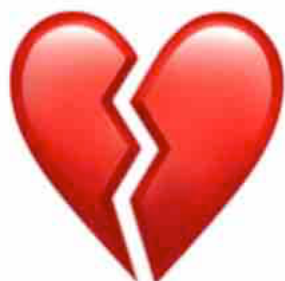


Exercise and therapy can heal a broken heart

11th September 2025



A broken heart is a real condition. The medical name for it is takotsubo cardiomyopathy. It is caused by severe emotional or physical stress. This stress can come from losing a loved one or breaking up with a

romantic partner. Doctors think they have a cure for it. Researchers at Aberdeen University in Scotland conducted a 12-week test on 76 people with broken heart syndrome. The patients had a weekly counselling session. They also took part in an exercise programme, which included aerobics, cycling and swimming. The British Heart Foundation said it was surprised by how much the counselling "improved heart function and patients' fitness".

Hundreds of thousands of people worldwide suffer from broken heart syndrome. It mainly affects women and can double the risk of dying early. The syndrome may explain why a spouse dies soon after their partner's death. Sufferers feel like they are having a heart attack. Symptoms include chest pain, shortness of breath, and fatigue. The syndrome makes the heart change shape. The heart becomes rounder, like an octopus. "Takotsubo" is a Japanese word. It means a round pot used to catch an octopus. Lead researcher Dr David Gamble said his research highlights the importance of the brain-heart relationship. He said mental and physical therapy can help sufferers.

Sources: [theguardian.com](https://www.theguardian.com) / [mirror.co.uk](https://www.mirror.co.uk) / [yahoo.com](https://www.yahoo.com)

Writing

A broken heart is the worst feeling in the world. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

broken heart / emotional stress / a loved one / romantic / cure / doctors / fitness / suffer / risk / spouse / chest pain / fatigue / octopus / research / brain / therapy

True / False

- 1) The article says a broken heart is not real. T / F
- 2) Doctors say they are a long way from finding a cure for a broken heart. T / F
- 3) Brokenhearted patients had daily counselling sessions for 12 weeks. T / F
- 4) A heart foundation was surprised at the effectiveness of counselling. T / F
- 5) Broken heart syndrome affects women most. T / F
- 6) Broken heart syndrome makes the heart change shape. T / F
- 7) The medical word for broken heart syndrome is a Japanese word. T / F
- 8) The lead researcher said there was no link between the heart and brain. T / F

Synonym Match

(The words in **bold** are from the news article.)

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----------------|
| 1. condition | a. tiredness |
| 2. severe | b. carried out |
| 3. cure | c. globally |
| 4. conducted | d. husband/wife |
| 5. counselling | e. illness |
| 6. worldwide | f. focuses on |
| 7. spouse | g. remedy |
| 8. fatigue | h. link |
| 9. highlights | i. serious |
| 10. relationship | j. therapy |

Discussion – Student A

- a) What do you think about what you read?
- b) Why do you think women are more likely to have a broken heart?
- c) What can heartbreak teach us?
- d) Have you ever been heartbroken because you lost something?
- e) How important is the heart-brain relationship?
- f) Do men and women deal with heartbreak differently?
- g) Is mental or physical therapy better for your heart?
- h) What questions would you like to ask the researchers?

Phrase Match

1. A broken heart is a real
 2. It is caused by severe emotional
 3. This stress can come from losing
 4. Doctors think they have
 5. the counselling improved heart
 6. Hundreds of
 7. double the risk
 8. Symptoms include chest
 9. a round pot used to
 10. the importance of the brain-
- a. thousands of people
 - b. a cure for it
 - c. condition
 - d. catch an octopus
 - e. or physical stress
 - f. pain
 - g. function
 - h. heart relationship
 - i. a loved one
 - j. of dying early

Discussion – Student B

- a) What do you think of broken hearts?
- b) What's the best way to recover from a broken heart?
- c) How often are you stressed?
- d) Have you ever had a broken heart?
- e) Has not passing or winning at something ever broken your heart?
- f) How well do you look after your heart?
- g) What would you say to someone who broke your heart?
- h) What advice do you have for someone with a broken heart?

Spelling

1. A broken heart is a real oiointdnc
2. The icdaeml name for it
3. eeserv emotional or physical stress
4. tnddccueo a 12-week test on 76 people
5. patients had a weekly counselling sssneoi
6. counselling vrmdoeipi heart function
7. usferf from broken heart syndrome
8. It mainly cffates women
9. ubeold the risk of dying early
10. chest pain, shortness of breath, and eaiutfg
11. a round pot used to catch an ptocosu
12. mental and physical apehrty

Answers – Synonym Match

1. e	2. i	3. g	4. b	5. j
6. c	7. d	8. a	9. f	10. h

Comprehension Questions

Listen to / read the news article. Answer these questions.
(Answers are on p. 27 of the 27-page PDF.)

1.	What is the common name for the term takotsubo cardiomyopathy?
2.	What is broken heart syndrome caused by?
3.	How many brokenhearted people did the researchers test?
4.	How often did the patients have counselling sessions?
5.	How did the British Heart Foundation feel about the counselling?
6.	How many people around the world suffer from broken heart syndrome?
7.	What does having broken heart syndrome feel like?
8.	What does the article say the heart becomes as round as?
9.	What did a researcher highlight the importance of?
10.	What did the researcher say can help sufferers?

Speaking – Broken Heart

Rank these with your partner. Put the best to heal a broken heart at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- Counselling
- Cycling
- Friends
- Shopping
- Time
- Meditation
- Hiking
- Movies

Answers – True False

1 F	2 F	3 F	4 T	5 T	6 T	7 T	8 F
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.