

21 ways to find happiness

Charmaine Yabsley talks to top holistic health experts about how to inject colour, excitement, and sparkle into every day.

1 Sing nursery rhymes

"Whenever you think a negative thought, sing 'Baa baa, black sheep' - this will break the unhelpful state and take your mind to a more neutral space," says hypnotherapist Georgia Foster. "Then think of a time when you felt love, laughter, and lightness. Repeat these two steps every time you feel low, angry, or overwhelmed. The more you do it, the more your mind learns to tune out unhelpful thoughts: it becomes a habit."

2 Feed your skin

"Up to 60 percent of what we put on our skin can be absorbed," says Irene Falcone, founder of Nourished Life. "Any toxins absorbed this way can potentially cause low energy levels and hormone disruption, which certainly affect overall happiness. Use certified organic, 100 percent natural products to see and feel the difference in your body and mind. Feeding your skin with nutrient-rich plant extracts and oils will have a more positive effect on mood than petro-chemicals and parabens."

3 Be grateful

"The key to happiness is gratitude," says Charlie de Haas, creator of Clean Treats. "If you are grateful for what you have in your

life in this exact moment, you will be contented and genuinely feel good about your life. Try a 'technical detox' at night: thirty minutes before bed, get off the phone, stop watching TV and think of three things you feel grateful for. Do this every night to cultivate an attitude of gratitude."

4 Embrace your face

"As a naturopath, I see first-hand the crippling effects skin problems can have on self esteem," says Barbara Filokostas, founder of Botani Skincare. "However, beauty is more than just skin deep - there's beauty within us all. To improve your happiness, mindfully love and respect yourself and embrace your own unique natural inner and outer beauty."

5 Take control

"Achieving a sense of control over our lives is something we need" says Vanessa Bennett, CEO of Inside 80 Performance. "Exercising control gives us balance and a sense of power. Saying 'yes' - and importantly, saying 'no' - to things brings us closer to our 'Natural Pace', where our energy and performance are at their peak. Identifying whether you are slow or fast-paced and moderating your lifestyle to match this pace increases productivity and reduces effort, as we spend less energy credits to achieve success."

Consciously be grateful for all the good things, no matter how small. What you appreciate, appreciates.

6 Do an energy audit

"Feeling happy is about surrounding yourself with people you like, activities that bring out the best in you, and enjoying the environment you live in," says Happiness Concierge Rachel Service. "An energy audit is a great tool to keep you on track. Map out three columns on a piece of paper: head them up People, Activities, and Items. Under each column, list the people you interact with and activities you undertake in any given week, and material items in your life. Then, allocate a positive, negative or neutral symbol to each. From this, you'll have a list of positives to be thankful for and negatives to start to look at changing for the better."

7 Look forward

"Focusing on the future and setting realistic goals, with small bite-sized sub-goals that can be achieved with tiny changes, makes a big difference to feeling happy and positive," says life coach Pippa

Quinn. "Using guided imagery helps manifest your future reality: how do you imagine your future goal will look, feel, smell? Make it as real as possible, so you can go to this desired state more easily."

8 Be present

"Take in all the good and be fully present to life's many tiny, joyful moments," says wellness coach Brigitte Najjarm. "By appreciating these moments and increasing their intensity and duration by lingering on them for longer, we're effectively 'hard-wiring' them into our brains and overcoming the brain's ancient 'negativity bias'. When you have a positive experience, slow it down. Take a breath. Stay with it. Keep feeling it. Absorb it for 10 to 20 seconds at a time to really help it sink in."

9 Get moving

"Producing endorphins through exercise increases the levels of 'feel good' chemicals in the nervous system," says

What you put on your skin can directly affect your mood, so opt for natural products, particularly ones you use daily, like moisturisers.

owner of Fit Fantastic Ali Cavill. "This also has a protective effect, helping to repair your memory neurons and acting as a reset switch for body and mind, so you feel stronger and more confident."

10 Do more of what you love

"Life is for fun, good times, and love!" says life and success coach Alyce Pilgrim. "It's not all just paying bills, work, and struggle - there is no way you were born just for that. Do more of what you love. Travel. Breathe. Stretch. Laugh. Love. Spend time with friends. Go to the beach. Cook. Read. Unwind. Get your adrenal junkie on! Volunteer. Spend time with your family. What lights you up and makes you feel happy? Make those things your priority."

11 Find your focus

"What you focus on in life determines what shows up for you," adds Pilgrim. "A good test is to ask yourself what you are noticing about your life. It's tricky to feel happy if you are noticing all the not-so-great things that are happening. Instead, deliberately begin to notice all the good things, everything that makes you happy, no matter how small. Every time something makes you happy - revel in it."

12 Perfect your pillars

"In ancient times, they had something called Solomon's Temple, and in Solomon's Temple there were two pillars," says holistic health coach Tyler Tolman. "It was believed that if a person perfected these two pillars, they would find happiness. One of the pillars was called 'jachin', which meant to straighten. It's interesting because the word 'vegetable' also means to straighten. I believe that eating vegetables, seeds, grains and nuts will straighten and align the body. The second pillar was 'boaz', which meant to enlighten or add joy. And the word fruit actually means joy, to enlighten. So if we add fruits to our body, we are providing it with the sweetness, hydration, and electricity that come from fruit, which ultimately I believe brings us joy. Be happy!"

13 Tune in

"Most people start each day with negative or scattered thoughts," says life and confidence coach Lisa Phillips. "Choose to set your intention for the day by focusing on deliberately finding thoughts that feel good to you. Tune into your gut and affirm general, non-pressurised statements such as, 'It would be nice if I felt happy today' or 'I like the feeling of happiness'. Do this for at least 60 seconds each morning and allow the momentum of positive

emotions to build naturally. It takes focus, but after only a short while, happiness will become your dominant feeling each morning."

14 Take action

"Happiness can be activated by focusing on good memories from the past, taking positive actions in the present, or creating optimistic expectations for the future," says psychologist Aleks George. "For example, send a quick text, email or note to a friend about anything that is positive or funny in your life right now. Or, take a minute to close your eyes and recall a time when you felt happy and give yourself the gift of re-experiencing it by immersing yourself in that memory. Or imagine in detail a highly enjoyable future scenario which is going to occur, like a holiday."

15 Reduce stress

"Stress negatively impacts your wellbeing; plus, as stress levels increase your life energy decreases, which limits your ability to cope," says kinesiologist Marney Perna. "One simple way to increase your life energy is by choosing to be happy. Look through the albums that are gathering dust in your cupboard and take out photos of happier times - baby photos, snaps from a fun holiday or just a time that you were laughing helplessly at something silly. Having these photo memories out in the open reminds your body of happier times, which has the effect of activating your happy hormones."

16 Be definite

"One of my favourite sayings is, 'You won't find it until you define it!'" says life creation specialist Coach Bobbi. "You'll identify your happiness from that buzzing,

joyous feeling you get when you're in that space of imagination and possibility. That's your version of happiness. Once you've done that, you can 'start with the end in mind', and work your way back from there."

17 Smile

"Even if you don't feel like it, smile anyway," says counsellor and success coach Luke Sheedy. "Your brain can't tell the difference between a posed smile and a genuine one - they actually have the same result, which is that your facial muscles send messages to your brain, telling you to experience that positive emotion."

18 Think positive

"Start with your personal self-talk - the endless stream of words and thoughts that you say to yourself each day," adds Sheedy. "Use daily affirmations and practise positive self-talk, banishing negative or self-sabotaging thoughts."

19 Turn it around

"Our deepest motive is to experience happiness," says life and health coach Terry Bahat. "Everything we do is driven by the desire to be happy. But what we forget is that we are already happy - we do not need to look for it, work for it, attempt to buy it, or achieve goals to experience it. All those actions simply delay it. All we need to do is to decide to be happy, and make that decision a habit. Begin with your heart. Wear a permanent smile on your heart and then make sure your heart is connected to your face. Then you will be happy faster, deeper and longer."

20 Take supplements

"The following supplements may help to boost your happiness levels," says nutrition advisor Simone Nicholls. "Vitamin D, vitamin B6 (in red meat, chicken or wholegrain cereals),

omega-3 (DHA) to improve cognitive function and behaviour, and St John's wort, as a herbal tea or supplement."

21 Do something new

"We have a great deal of influence over our own happiness - research shows us that 40 percent of our happiness is determined by what we do each and every day," says Dr Jodi Richardson, health and happiness coach. "Try learning something new, connecting with a friend in person, rather than e-mail, or doing something kind for someone. Practise engaging all of your senses in a daily mindfulness activity - perhaps your morning shower? And move your body! Exercise may in fact be the most effective instant happiness booster of all."



Meet our experts

Words of wisdom from those who know



Georgia Foster, hypnotherapist and alcohol control specialist. www.georgiafoster.com



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