

Wellbeing

Living a Better, More Vibrant Life

Insights



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10 Keys to Living a Happier Life

Think you are unhappy by nature? Miserable because of your life circumstances? Think again! Research has shown that we do indeed operate around a happiness “set point.” However, only 50 percent of this set point is due to genetics and upbringing. A mere 10 percent is related to life circumstances, and the other 40 percent is purely under our control (e.g.,

our activities, relationships, how we choose to live our life). Many people state that simply being happy is one of their biggest life goals. The good news is that extensive research has yielded consistent findings on how to achieve it. The following 10 keys put improving happiness in your hands!

Keys to a Happier Life: GREAT DREAM Continued from page 1

GIVING: Generosity is strongly bound to the reward center in our brain; if you want to feel good, do good! Giving also helps us build stronger connections with others and creates happier communities on a large scale.

RELATING: People with strong social relationships are not only happier, they also live longer. Take the time to nurture the relationships in your life that bring you a sense of support and belonging. Remember, we become more like the people we spend time with, so choose carefully!

EXERCISING: Our body and our mind are strongly connected. Being active will instantly improve your mood and is a miracle worker for your overall happiness. View physical activity as a tool for happiness instead of a chore to accomplish; you may be surprised with the difference this little change in mindset can make.

APPRECIATING: Take the time to notice the little things and appreciate the beauty around you. Tuning in to the present moment throughout the day can help us cope better with daily life and keep us rooted in the here and now.

TRYING OUT: Keep a healthy curiosity in daily life and try to learn something new every day. This helps keep us engaged in daily life, builds self-confidence and resilience, and has a host of other benefits, all depending on what you choose to learn about.

DIRECTION: Setting goals is an important part of maintaining motivation, a sense of direction and purpose, and feelings of accomplishment and satisfaction. Set both short-term and long-term goals for yourself that are personally meaningful and challenging enough to excite you yet also realistic and achievable.

RESILIENCE: Although we may not have the power to control what happens to us, we always have the power to choose how to respond. It is important for our happiness that we develop ways to bounce back during trying times. Remember, if you can't change it, change the way you think about it.

EMOTION: Regularly experiencing positive emotions such as joy, gratitude, inspiration and pride can create an upward spiral of happiness over the long-term. Make an effort to acknowledge the good things in life (no matter how small) and what you are grateful for on a daily basis.

ACCEPTANCE: Self-acceptance is an important key to happiness. Avoid comparing yourself to others as much as possible, and focus on building up your strengths instead of fixating on your flaws. Remember to be kind to yourself.

MEANING: People who feel they are a part of something bigger and have a purpose and meaning outside of themselves are happier, feel more in control and get more out of what they are doing.

Learn more at actionforhappiness.org

“IT’S NOT HOW MUCH WE HAVE, BUT HOW MUCH WE ENJOY THAT MAKES HAPPINESS.”

— CHARLES SPURGEON





On the Menu

Zucchini

Due to its mild flavor and fairly inexpensive price, zucchini is the perfect summer staple. It's ideal for sneaking veggies into any meal as it's easily tossed into baked goods and casseroles for a nutritional boost. Give grilled zucchini center stage by adding any of your favorite seasonings for an easy crowd-pleasing side dish. It boasts more than versatility with impressive nutritional benefits. Zucchini is high in water content and rich in fiber, making it a very low-calorie friend that aids in digestion. One cup of sliced zucchini has only about 19 calories while delivering substantial amounts of antioxidants, Vitamin C, manganese, potassium and lutein. In general, zucchini is great for:

- Heart health
- Eyesight
- Digestion
- Weight management

Keep It Fresh

When selecting a zucchini look for firm, small to medium sizes and shiny skin. You can find this squash in a variety of colors from yellow to dark green. The color will not affect the taste much as long as the fruit is still firm and there are no pits or wrinkling in the skin. It's best to store zucchini in the fridge in a loose plastic bag and eat within four days.

Zoodles

This fresh, healthy pasta substitute has taken the world by storm! Zucchini noodles, or “zoodles,” are a fun and tasty way to increase your veggie intake! Zoodles contains $\frac{1}{8}$ the calories of pasta and $\frac{1}{10}$ the carbs!

Ingredients:

- Whole zucchini – however much you would like to prepare

Directions:

You can prepare zoodles using a counter-top spiralizer, hand-held spiralizer, julienne peeler or vegetable peeler. An actual spiralizer of some sort is faster and creates prettier zoodles, but if you want to try zoodles before investing in a new kitchen utensil, use a peeler. Zoodles can be eaten raw, steamed, sautéed or roasted. Use them as a substitute for pasta or add them to your favorite salad or soup. The possibilities are endless.

If you do not want your zoodles to have a crunch to them, it is wise to prepare them at least one day prior to eating. Store them in the refrigerator in a sealed plastic container lined with paper towels to allow them to sweat out most of their water. To speed this process up, you may also choose to lay your zoodles on a pan and sprinkle them with sea salt which will draw the moisture out more quickly (20-30 minutes). Zoodles will stay fresh in the fridge for up to five days, but freezing them will ruin their texture so plan to use them the week you make them.



Nutrition Info	
Per 1 cup serving	
Calories	18
Carbohydrates	3.8g
Fiber	1.2 g
Protein	1.4g
Sodium	11mg

Back-to-School Tips for Parents

Getting off to a good start each school year can tremendously influence a child's attitude for the entire year. This transition from summer can be difficult for parents as well, but a little planning can go a long way. Here are a few suggestions to help ease the adjustment and prepare your child (and you) for a successful school year.

- **Mark your calendar.** Schedule out doctor appointments in advance, including sports physicals and necessary immunizations. Mark your calendar with any important dates provided by the school.
- **Meet the teacher and tour the school.** Meeting the teacher ahead of time can greatly ease any anxiety your child may have about starting a new year and help you establish a parent-teacher relationship early on. Touring the school can help them feel more comfortable and give you a good visual for when you hear about their day. Make sure your child practices opening their locker and locates all of his or her classrooms.
- **Re-establish a routine.** Oftentimes, routine goes out the window for summer vacation, but a well-respected bedtime routine will help your child get the quality sleep needed to succeed at school. Have your family ease back into the routine at least a week in advance of school starting. When school starts, have your child get their backpack and outfit (including shoes) ready for the next day.
- **Plan ahead for healthy meals.** Prioritize a healthy breakfast. Just like adults, kids need protein and healthy fat in the morning. Egg

muffins are a great go-to. Simply scramble eggs with your favorite meats and/or veggies, pour into a muffin tin, bake at 350 degrees for 20 minutes, then let cool and refrigerate. Pop them in the microwave for 20-30 seconds for a quick and healthy breakfast on the go.

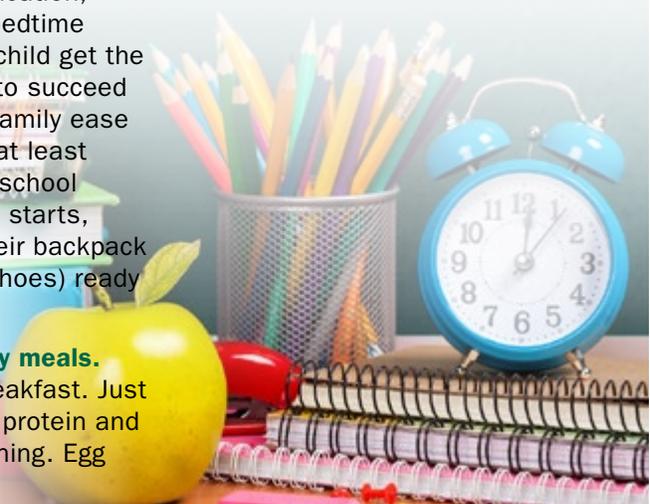
- **Prepare a study area.** Set up a special area for homework. Remove distractions while keeping the area inviting. For example, keep it out of earshot of the television but include interesting colors and a comfortable place to sit.
- **Avoid overscheduling.** The first couple weeks of school, especially for younger kids, may be exhausting. Be mindful of piling on too many afterschool activities until they are adjusted.
- **Check in.** It can be like pulling teeth to get kids to open up and share how their day went. Give kids a chance to unwind after school before asking them twenty questions. Rather than asking yes/no questions, find creative ways to learn about their experiences, friendships and challenges, and be sure to share how your day went too.



Mindful Minute

The power of positive thinking is profound! Regularly experiencing positive emotions such as joy, pride, gratitude and inspiration is predictive of overall human flourishing, including longer life span, less stress and better psychological and physical health. Optimism and pessimism are not personality traits that are entirely out of our control. In fact, optimism is an emotional skill that takes consistent practice to create a lasting habit. Here are some tips to start transforming yourself into a more positive thinker:

- **Smile.** The physical act of smiling, even if we aren't happy, can greatly impact our mood and outlook.
- **Look for the learning opportunity in every failure and bad experience.** If it helps to talk things out with a friend, do it!
- **Start small by identifying a specific area of your life you tend to have negative thoughts about.** Recognize and replace the negative with a positive thought.
- **Repeat affirmations that inspire and motivate you.** Post sticky notes or reminders that keep this in the forefront of your mind.
- **Don't ruminate on negative things that are out of your control.** Practice the art of letting go.



App in a Snap

Name: Five Minute Journal
Price: Free
Focus: Happiness & Wellbeing

The Five Minute Journal, designed using the principals of positive psychology, promotes itself as a “toothbrush for the mind”— use the app a few minutes, twice a day, to increase happiness. Each morning, log in to note three things that you are grateful for and specify how you will make the day amazing! There is also space to affirm how you will embrace the days’ joys and tasks. At the end of the day, “brush again,” this time reflecting on three positive things that happened and how you could have made the day even better. Daily quotes and weekly challenges keep users motivated to create a habit of using the tool.

Through the Five Minute Journal, Emily Noll, National Director of CBIZ Wellbeing Solutions, sets a morning and evening reminder to log in for a daily dose of inspiration and to document, through words and pictures, the best moments of each day. She says it’s a simple tool that busy professionals can use to get their day started on the right foot, express gratitude and optimize wellbeing.

Get Some Satisfaction

Five specific character traits have been identified as the most highly related to life happiness and satisfaction. They are hope, zest, gratitude, curiosity and love. Here are some simple activities that can help you boost these traits in your everyday life to get more satisfaction.

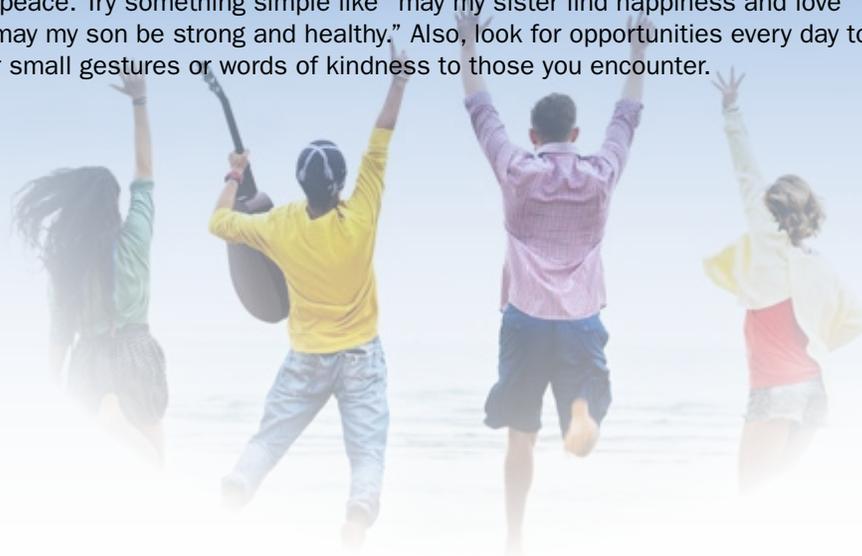
Hope: Hope is a combination of setting goals, having the tenacity and perseverance to pursue them, and believing in our own abilities. In order to cultivate more hope, start by visualizing the best possible version of yourself. What does it look like and what are the next achievable steps you can take toward this goal? Write down your answers. This will help you create a logical structure for the future and can help you identify concrete possibilities for improvement. Lastly, always remember that your track record for surviving tough days so far is 100 percent, which should certainly give you hope!

Zest: Zest is approaching life with vigor and enthusiasm. The winning combination for cultivating more zest is a mix of exercise, social connection and savoring the moment. In order to feel fully energized in the world around you, plan a hike with a friend, join a recreational sports league or engage in any other new physically active adventure while enjoying the company of others.

Gratitude: When it comes to maintaining a sense of gratitude and appreciation, practice makes perfect. We must make an effort to acknowledge, reflect on and emphasize the good things in life and watch carefully for negative self-talk. A gratitude journal can help keep yourself accountable. Each day, write down the best part of your day and one person you are grateful for. If you feel inclined, you could even reach out to that person directly to let them know.

Curiosity: Curious how curiosity leads to happiness? It’s the fastest route to a profoundly satisfying sense of accomplishment. Curiosity helps us tap into our intellectual potential, master new tasks and reap social rewards. Reawaken your curiosity by reframing boring situations. Look for details in everyday situations you wouldn’t normally notice and seek to learn more about them.

Love: Whether or not you subscribe to the notion that love is all you need, it is at least an important part of a happy life. Take time each day to cultivate more love by sitting quietly for a moment and wishing yourself and others happiness and peace. Try something simple like “may my sister find happiness and love” or “may my son be strong and healthy.” Also, look for opportunities every day to offer small gestures or words of kindness to those you encounter.



How to Buy Happiness

Did you know that in the past 50 years the average amount of personal space (e.g., the size of your house, car, etc.) has tripled? At the same time, our debt and environmental footprints have increased, yet general levels of happiness have stayed the same. So what gives? It is apparent that spending money to have more “stuff” doesn’t necessarily make us happier. However, if you believe money can’t buy happiness, you may just be spending it wrong. Here are some proven purchases that increase happiness:

Charity: Studies show a positive link between charity and happiness. Time and time again, those who spend money on others become happier than those who spend the same amount on themselves. Gallup research confirms that the happiness people experience from giving to charity occurs worldwide despite variance in disposable income. Consider reallocating a portion of the money you typically (or impulsively) spend on ‘stuff’ to a charity or community initiative that has special meaning—the return on investment of doing good is warm and fuzzy feelings that will outlast a new pair of shoes or the latest electronic gadget.

Experiences: When it comes to treating ourselves, spending money on experiences will increase happiness much more than buying items. If you don’t have the funds for a grandiose vacation, don’t worry, as a variety of experiences, from day trips to local festivals, cost less and improve your quality of life. It is our life experiences and the people we share them with that will lead to happiness. In addition to lasting memories, new experiences enable personal development and growth which also increases happiness.

Where you spend your time: When it comes to actually purchasing items, spend your money where you spend your time. If you are budgeting for more “stuff,” it may help you prioritize if you consider where you actually spend your time and which purchases may truly make your life more enjoyable. For example, if you spend every evening on your deck, invest in a nice patio set and some plants or flowers.

Time: Buy yourself more time to do the things you love by hiring a babysitter, a housecleaner, etc. Purchases that afford you more time to enjoy life are a luxury worth the investment for many.

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