

How to Be Happy:

26 Strategies Backed by
Research

Checklist



1. Have a Rich Social Life and Nurture Social Relationships

- Practice active and constructive responding.
- Ditch the small talk and get personal.
- Try hugging more.

2. Let Go of Materialism

- Start pursuing intrinsic goals.
- Practice mindfulness.
- Become a minimalist.

3. Spend Your Money to Maximize Happiness

- Buy experiences, not goods.
- Use your money to benefit others, not yourself.
- In general, spend your money on proven happiness boosters.
(Duh!)

4. Make Happy Choices (Satisficing VS. Maximizing)

- Practice gratitude.
- Stop comparing yourself to other people.
- Make this your new motto: good enough is good enough.

5. Stop Overthinking

- Distract yourself.
- Write it down.
- Practice mindfulness.

6. Stop Comparing Yourself to Other People

- Follow a new definition of success.
- See strategies for overthinking

7. Practice Gratitude

- Keep a gratitude journal.
- Do the what-went-well exercise.
- Write a gratitude letter.

8. Learn to Cope with Negative Events or Chronic Problems

- Labeling negative emotions.
- Reframing (or cognitive reappraisal).
- Expressive writing.

9. Practice Forgiveness

- Realize that people don't have a free will.
- For the heavy duty stuff, try one of these strategies: Everett Worthington's [REACH](#) method, Robert Enright's [Forgiveness Process Model](#), or Fred Luskin's [Nine Steps to Forgiveness](#).

10. Cultivate Optimism

- The Best Possible Selves Exercise.
- Dispute negative thoughts.

11. Pursue Meaningful Life Goals

- Your goal should meet the following three criteria:

- It should be intrinsic, not extrinsic.
- It should be specific.
- It should be difficult.

12. Experience More “Flow”

- Don't be a couch potato.
- Give yourself a 'flow test'.
- Follow this recipe.

13. Savor the Good Things in Your Life

- Enjoy ordinary experiences.
- Share positive experiences and memories with others.
- Replay past successes.
- Make memories physical.
- Go on a savoring walk.

14. Practice Mindfulness

- Try formal practice (e.g. doing a guided body scan meditation)
- Try informal practice (e.g. mindful eating)

15. Meditate

- Mindfulness meditation:
- Loving-kindness meditation:
- Body scan meditation:

16. Exercise Regularly

- For the long haul, choose a type of exercise you enjoy.
- For extra benefits, work out in nature.
- For even more extra benefits, work out with other people.

17. Act Like a Happy Person

- Smile more.
- Assume good posture.
- Copy these behaviors of happy people.

18. Practice Acts of Kindness

- Give the gift of time.
- Volunteer.
- Bring a gift.

19. Use Your Signature Strengths

- Use your signature strengths in new ways.
- Recraft your job.

20. Find Something to Look Forward to

- Create plans for the weekend.
- Plan a vacation for in a few months or next year.
- Make a plan to do something fun at the end of a hard day's work.
- Get a weekly massage or spa appointment.

21. Stop Watching the News

- Turn off news alerts.
- Delete news apps on your smartphone and other devices.

22. Spend Time in Nature

- When the weather is good, get outside.

23. Write Your Way to Happiness

- Write yourself a self-compassionate letter.
- Gratitude journaling.
- What-went-well exercise.
- Your best possible self.
- Write a gratitude letter.

24. Get a Pet

- Dogs and cats are a great option.

25. Make Sure You Read this Article

- Read the full article.
- Check out my favorite books on happiness.
 - [The How of Happiness](#) by Sonja Lyubomirsky
 - [Authentic Happiness](#) by Martin Seligman
 - [Hardwiring Happiness](#) by Rick Hanson

26. Just... Try!

- Try to extract some happiness from everyday activities.
- Put in the necessary effort.