

How to Be Happy: 23 Ways to Be Happier

The complete guide to boosting happiness in 2018, according to science.

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People often ask me: "*What can I do to boost my happiness?*"

I tell them that there are tons of things you can do, and even though I've written [a book about how to increase happiness now, in the technology age](#), I often can only recall a handful of strategies to use in the moment. So I decided to create this complete guide for how to be happy, according to science. If you use these 23 practices consistently, you are very likely to increase your personal happiness (check out even more [happiness-boosting strategies here](#)):

1. Find out what to do first.

How are you supposed to build the right happiness skills if you don't know which ones you are struggling with in the first place? This is why it's helpful to [take a quiz to explore your happiness strengths and weaknesses](#). Get a better understanding of [what these skills are all about](#), and learn how to [improve upon your weaknesses and build your "happiness strengths."](#)

2. Give yourself a confidence boost.

Why would you bother increasing your happiness if you didn't think you could be successful at it? You wouldn't. That's why it's so important to build your self-efficacy — to prove to yourself that you can increase your happiness. [The best way to do this is by starting with easier skills](#) — skills like [gratitude](#) or [prioritizing spending time doing fun things](#). Get a quick

win, and you'll be more confident that you really can change your life.

3. Fuel your progress by learning how to feel better about yourself.

You wouldn't practice math to get better at cooking. And you wouldn't learn another language to lose weight. To be happier, you'll likely make more progress by focusing on the skills that are most closely linked to happiness. In my research, the skill that usually turns out to be most closely linked to happiness is: positive self-views. [Learning how to feel better about yourself](#) — for example, by [imagining your best possible self](#), [noting your positive qualities](#), or [identifying your strengths](#) — can go a long way to increasing your happiness.

4. Create balance and overcome [burnout](#).

How are you supposed to have the energy to be happier [if you're stressed](#), exhausted, and miserable from work? It will be really hard. Building new skills, skills that will help you be happier, will take time and energy. So it's helpful first to [create better work-life balance](#).

5. Build a [growth mindset](#) for happiness.

A growth mindset refers to the belief that we can change ourselves. When we [build a growth mindset for happiness](#), we believe we can change our happiness. This is super important, because if we don't believe we *can* increase our happiness, we won't even bother to try.

6. Make positive memories.

Every region in our brains can be strengthened through practice. If our brains are really good at remembering negative things that happen, it can be useful to [strengthen the regions of the brain responsible for remembering positive things](#).

7. Find those silver linings.

Everything we experience can be a bummer if we choose to see it that way. But when you search for the benefits or silver linings in your life, you may be surprised to discover a lot of good. Keep practicing to [think positive](#) and decrease the negative to cultivate happiness. Also, this skill has been linked to a better ability to cope with [stress](#) and be more [resilient](#).



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8. Take breaks from social media.

[Facebook tends to have a negative effect on our happiness](#). By choosing to take breaks from Facebook — or changing the way we use social media — we can boost our happiness.

9. Spend smarter for more happiness.

[How we choose to spend our money impacts what we can do and how we live in ways that impact how happy we are](#).

When we choose a less fancy house or car — things that don't bring us much happiness — we have more money to spend on adventures or on gifts for friends: things that actually do make us happier.

10. Communicate kindly.

When we are [kind to others](#), we feel better about ourselves. We can [do nice things for others](#), [be empathetic](#), or we can just treat each other with respect, [communicating kindly rather than assuming the worst](#).

11. End your negative patterns of thinking.

Let's face it: Sometimes we are what's making us miserable. We just can't stop thinking about how so-and-so wronged us, or how our life didn't turn out as we hoped. Negative thought processes — like [worrying](#), [ruminating](#), [self-judgment](#), and [fearing rejection](#) — just keep us miserable and unable to move forward. [When you find yourself thinking negatively, pause and refocus your thoughts](#). In time, your brain will be able to do this more easily on its own.

12. Find clarity.

How are you supposed to move your life forward when you don't even know what you feel or why you feel it? To become happier, try to [gain clarity on your emotions](#); [find out what you're feeling and what caused those feelings](#).

13. Live your values.

When you start to [explore yourself and your values](#), you may discover that you've known all along what would make you happy, but you're just not doing it. To be happier, [get clear on your values](#), so that you can [live your life autonomously](#), according to your own principles and values.

14. Pay [attention](#) to the good.

Sure, sometimes life is hard. But by [paying attention to the good](#), you can rise above it and be more resilient. When you find the good, [savor the moment](#), and bring it with you to maintain happiness even during hard times. Or [try thinking about a time in the future when you'll feel better](#).

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15. Use your imagination to create the life you seek.

Did you know that your brain has a difficult time differentiating between things that happen in your imagination and things that happen in real life? So when you imagine something — even happiness — your brain acts as if it's real. We can [use imagination to help create happiness](#) out of thin air and [enjoy our experiences more](#).

16. Stay mindful.

Sometimes we want to escape. The world seems dark and scary, but by [practicing mindfulness](#) we experience more fully both the positive and the negative — we are more fully engaged in our lives.

17. Explore what happiness means to you.



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We all define happiness in different ways. When you [know what happiness means to you](#), you'll have an easier time finding it. So explore happiness — what it means, [what it looks like](#), and what it feels like — to more easily create happiness and [live a life filled with more purpose](#).

18. Go after life.

How are you supposed to change your life by doing the same things you've always done? It's pretty tough. Instead, push yourself to overcome [fear](#) and [approach life](#) with enthusiasm. Try "[doing the opposite](#)" to see how it feels and to make your brain more flexible.

19. Speak up and be yourself.

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When we let people walk all over us, we're unhappy. But when we [advocate for our own needs assertively](#) and [express ourselves](#), we feel more in control of our lives. [Learning how to express yourself](#) can help you overcome interpersonal challenges, which can make you unhappy.

20. Find your purpose.

We all want to feel like we made some sort of positive impact in this world, but sometimes we are uncertain of the type of impact we want to make. Explore exactly [what gives you a sense of purpose](#) and how you want to pursue this [purpose](#) to give your life a greater sense of meaning.

21. Build meaningful connections.

Did you know [we enjoy just about everything more when we do it with others](#)? This is why one of the best things you can do for your happiness is to [build meaningful relationships](#) and social connections. To strengthen these relationships, practice kindness and [gratitude towards the people you care about](#).

22. Get off the [hedonic treadmill](#).

The "hedonic treadmill" refers to the [tendency for us to return to our original happiness level](#) over time. To [boost your baseline-level happiness](#), you can try changing your physiology through [nutrition](#) and exercise. To maintain your happiness, you have to [get out of your comfort zone](#) and [keep adding variety](#) to your [happiness plan](#).

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23. Hold yourself accountable.

We are more likely to do the things we say we're going to do if we [schedule time in our calendars to do them](#). We can also more easily stay on track if we [get accountability from others](#). So if you really want to [live happily](#), don't let yourself get away with being unhappy.