

Spontaneous Happiness

It is normal, healthy and productive to experience a variable range of moods and emotions, both positive and negative. Instead of trying to achieve constant happiness, cultivate contentment, comfort, serenity, and resilience.

Socialize. Humans are social animals. Join social and activity groups, and find communities with similar interests to yours.

Breathe. Practice putting your attention on your breath when you find you are stuck on troubling thoughts, making your breathing deeper, slower, quieter, and more regular.

Laugh. Laughter can increase immune response, lower blood sugar level and improve relaxation and sleep. And, laughing is simply one of life's greatest pleasures.

Exercise. Exercise can be as simple as doing house and yard work. Gym time and classes are beneficial, but walking outdoors with friends provides physical activity, a connection to nature, and social interaction.

Sleep. Mood disorders are strongly linked to abnormal patterns of dreaming, and healthy sleep is vital. Common problems with sleep can often be remedied without the use of medication.

Meditate. Meditation can be as simple as sitting still while keeping your attention on your breath. Do it even for ten minutes a day, every day, and you will begin the process of restructuring your mind.

Visualize. Practice shifting attention from negative thoughts to mental images that evoke positive feelings. Select an image that makes you happy and focus on it frequently.

Empathize. Perform acts of altruism in your daily activities. Kindness, generosity and service are learnable skills that allow you to identify with others on a deep level, lessening isolation and loneliness.

Forgive. It calms the mind and spirit and neutralizes resentment. Resentment fuels one of the most toxic forms of depressive rumination. Running thought loops over and over about past hurts is a major driver of depressive states.

Go green. Visit natural settings such as parks, beaches or mountain trails as often as you can. Get prudent, daily sunlight exposure, which has been proven to elevate mood.

Edit. Info spread via television, computers, and mobile phones is drowning us, and a great deal of it is irrelevant or suspect. Place firm limits on how much of it you let into your life, and take care with your choices of media.

Mute. Making an effort to experience silence regularly, even if briefly, supports our physical, mental, and spiritual well-being and brings full conscious awareness to the present moment.

Courtesy of Spontaneous Happiness by Andrew Weil, MD, and SpontaneousHappiness.com.
For additional tips on the 4-7-8 Relaxing Breath, healthy sleep, and more, visit www.azcim.org/resources.



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This is for information purposes only, and not intended as professional medical advice. If you are experiencing depression, speak with a health professional and get a complete medical check-up to rule out any underlying physical causes. If patients are socially or emotionally impaired or suicidal, an antidepressant and/or therapy is advised.