

CODE Community Support Group – Happiness

“Happiness can be found even in the darkest of places, if one only remembers to turn on the light”

Let’s re-set and refresh ourselves, carry out this simple task to bring you back into your body by connecting with the five senses



Vision - Look around and identify 5 objects you can see



Touch – Find 4 different textures you can touch and feel



Hearing - *if wearing headphones – remove them* listen to 3 different sounds in the environment around you



Smell – Can you identify two different smells in the air?



Taste - Can you feel if there is any taste still in your mouths from a meal you had or from brushing your teeth or something you drank.

This simple mini meditation technique will help to connect you with the world and sharpen your focus.

Nobody really knows who first coined the phrase 'money can't buy happiness'. However, focussing on your mental health can help to bring your happiness, and in turn focussing on happiness can help improve your mental health – Win/win!

Reducing mental health issues such as depression and anxiety would increase happiness by 20%, so tackling mental health problems would be 4 times more effective at increasing happiness than reducing poverty. And reducing mental illness doesn't have to cost a penny.

Being happy means so many different things to so many different people, so it is important not to compare your happiness to others and to focus on what really makes **you** happy. Your happiness is more important than others.

Let’s look at a few ways to improve happiness and reduce mental health issues:

- ✧ **Manage your stress levels** – Find ways to reduce your stress. This could be through time management techniques or by including regular exercise as part of your day-to-day routine.
- ✧ **Enjoy yourself!** – Make time to do the things you enjoy. Simple activities like watching your favourite TV shows, focussing on your favourite hobby, or even talking to a friend! Do something you’re good at! But avoid things that seem enjoyable at the time, but make you feel worse afterwards.
- ✧ **Boost your self-esteem** – The best way to do this is to treat yourself as you would do a valued friend, in a positive and honest way. Notice when you are putting yourself down and think if you would speak to your best friend in the same way you are speaking to yourself.

- ✳️ **Talk and Share** – Communication is important, whether it's with a friend, family member or counsellor. Talking things through helps you to release tension, rather than keeping it inside. It helps strengthen your relationships and connect with people.
- ✳️ **Build your resilience** – Resilience is what allows you to cope with life's ups and downs. Making something worthwhile out of painful times can help your resilience grow.
- ✳️ **Have a healthy lifestyle**
 - **Limit your alcohol intake**
 - **Choose a well-balanced diet**
 - **Do some exercise**
 - **Get enough sleep**
- ✳️ **Make it a priority** – Focus on your happiness and make it a prominent part of your day!

We have touched on habits before, and the importance of them. Habits can be used as part of your happiness routine, set them early and work on them so that they will last a lifetime.

As we mentioned at the beginning, happiness looks different for everyone. For some it is being at peace with who they are, for others it's having a secure network of friends who accept them unconditionally, or even the freedom to pursue dreams.

Regardless of your version of happiness, living a happier, more satisfied life is within reach. We are going to look at some daily, weekly, monthly and yearly habits to help kickstart your happiness journey.

Your path to achieving happiness may not follow a structure but stick with it and you will get there. If some of the habits mentioned below cause you stress or just do not fit your lifestyle, then don't try to fit them in. Remember to focus on what works for **you**.

Daily Habits

- **Smile** – We smile because we're happy, but also when we smile our brains release dopamine, which makes us happier.
- **Exercise** – even minimal, will be effective
- **Getting plenty of rest** – sleep is vital to good health, brain function and emotional well-being
- **Eat with mood in mind** – Food choices impact your overall physical health. But some can affect your state of mind too. Start by making one better food choice each day.
- **Be grateful** – Simply being grateful can give your mood a big boost, amongst other benefits.
- **Give a compliment** – performing acts of kindness can help you feel more satisfied.
- **Breathe Deeply** – instinctively you want to take a long, deep breath to calm yourself down in tense situations. This is great to reduce stress.
- **Acknowledge the unhappy moments** – A positive attitude is a good thing, but bad things happen to everyone – it's part of life. Acknowledge the feeling of unhappiness, letting yourself experience it for a moment, then shift your focus towards what made you feel this way and what it will take to recover.
- **Keep a journal** – It's a great way to organise your thoughts
- **Face stress head on** – It's impossible to avoid all life's stressors. It isn't always harmful, and we can change our attitudes towards it. Remind yourself that everyone has stress, and you are stronger than you think you are.

Weekly Habits

- ✓ **Declutter** – rather than make it a big project, separate it into small chunks and do 20 minutes a day.
- ✓ **See friends** – be it virtually or in person (you can meet one other person outside!). Humans are social beings and having close friends can make us happier.
- ✓ **Plan your week** – try sitting down at the end of the week and make a basic list for the following week.
- ✓ **Ditch your phone** – Unplug... no, really!! Try doing this for at least one hour a week. They'll still be there for you 1 hour later.
- ✓ **Get into nature** – Spending 30 minutes or more a week in green spaces can help lower blood pressure and depression.
- ✓ **Explore meditation** – CODE offers meditation sessions designed specifically for our residents. Visit codestudents.co/meditate to try.
- ✓ **Find a self-care ritual** – In such a fast-paced world, it's easy to forget about self-care. But your body carries your thoughts, passions, and spirit through this world – so it deserves some TLC.

Monthly Habits

- ❖ **Give Back** – If you find that giving daily compliments provides you with a boost, consider making a monthly routine of giving back on a larger scale. Helping out at a foodbank or offer to help a friend every month.
- ❖ **Take yourself out** – Treat yourself! Get that takeaway, get that outfit, watch that film. Spend some deliberate time alone.
- ❖ **Create a thought list** – You arrive somewhere with 10 minutes to spare, use that time wisely and jot down your thoughts.

Yearly Habits

- **Take time to reflect** – The start of a new year is a good time to stop and take inventory of your life. Set aside time to catch up with yourself the way you would an old friend.
- **Re-evaluate your goals** – People change. Think about where you're heading and consider if that's still where you want to go. There's no shame in changing your game.
- **Take care of your body** – You hear it all the time, but physical and mental health are closely intertwined.
- **Let go of grudges** – this is often easier said than done. But you don't have to do it for the other person. Sometimes, offering forgiveness or dropping a grudge is more about self-care than compassion for others.

Using what you have learnt today, write down 3 things you are going to do to help boost your happiness.

- 1.....
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- 2.....
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- 3.....
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CODE have plenty of ways to help you keep healthy each week...

Zumba

Online

Every Monday at 6pm

<https://codestudents.co/Fitness>



Yoga

Online

Every Tuesday at 6pm

<https://codestudents.co/Fitness>



Core

Online

Every Thursday at 6pm

<https://codestudents.co/Fitness>



Meditation

Online

Every Saturday

<https://codestudents.co/meditate>



CODE Community Support Group

(limited to 15)

Every Wednesday

1pm – 3pm in the Communal Area

<http://codestudents.co/support>



Grab and Go table

Pick up snacks, food, drinks or a book from our motivation library

Every Wednesday – 1pm – 4pm

Block B Foyer

