

The Happiness Advantage Exercises

By Shawn Achor

In a society where depression, anxiety and suicide rates have soared over the past decade, it's comforting to know that there's something we can do increase our happiness. These exercises, most of which take just 2 minutes per day, boost optimism and happiness and decrease stress and anxiety. It's a small amount of time for a huge return - and you're worth it!

THREE GRATITUDES - Boost your optimism, Train your brain to scan for the positive

1. Write down three new things every day that you're grateful - The 'less significant' the better.
2. Write down *why* you're grateful for them.
3. After 21 days, you will have re-trained your brain will scan for positives in your experiences.

THE DOUBLER - Increase the trajectory of meaning running through your life

1. Write down one significant event from the past 24 hours.
2. Bullet point each detail you can remember about that event for 2 minutes.
3. After 21 days, your brain will connect the dots and identify more meaning in your life.

THE FUN FIFTEEN - Decrease your likelihood of depression

1. Do a form of cardiovascular exercise for 15 minutes per day.
2. Your brain views exercise as a victory & that cascades into the rest of your life.
3. Increase your social connection/happiness by exercising with a friend.

MEDITATION - Improve your happiness, Decrease your stress

1. For 2 minutes per day, sit still and pay attention to your breath as it goes in and out of your body.
2. As thoughts float in, welcome them and move them along so you can get back to watching your breath.
3. This activity leads to higher levels of accuracy at work, elevated happiness and lower levels of stress.

CONSCIOUS ACTS OF KINDNESS - The key to lifelong happiness

1. Every day, before you start work, take 2 minutes to write an email or text to thank or praise one person you know. Pick a new person every day.
2. You'll receive positive emails and texts back and be perceived as a positive leader.
3. Do this every day for the rest of your life and your social connection, the greatest predictor of happiness, will soar.

RESOURCES

Washington Post Article

https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/inspired-life/wp/2015/06/29/do-these-exercises-for-two-minutes-a-day-and-youll-immediately-feel-happier-researchers-say/?noredirect=on&utm_term=.13d5427d822a

TED Talk

https://youtu.be/GXy_kBVq1M

Good Thinking inc. Action Plan

<http://goodthinkinc.com/wp-content/uploads/actionplanguide.pdf>

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