

DO THESE 7 ACTIONS SCIENCE SAYS KEEP US HAPPY

Do you have a friend who always seems to maintain a positive mindset even when the chips are down? Do you wonder what her secret is, and if there's anything you can do to stay happy even when things aren't necessarily going your way? Well, it turns out there is! Scientists have spent a lot of time studying the what, why, and how of happiness, and there are clear correlations between the choices we make and the way that we feel.

1. GET YOUR "HAPPY" SLEEP

Forget "Beauty Sleep"... what we should all be talking about is "Happy Sleep!" Science has proven time and again that sleep and mental health are closely connected, while, according to this Harvard Health article on sleep and mental health, "Neuroimaging and neurochemistry studies suggest that a good night's sleep helps foster both mental and emotional resilience." I recommend a minimum of seven hours sleep a night in order to be able to maintain a positive outlook on life. The takeaway? Start with a good night's sleep, and your day will automatically start off on a better foot than if you are sleep deprived.

2. MEDITATE. MEDITATE. MEDITATE.

Meditation has gone mainstream, and for good reason. That small sliver of your day that you dedicate to finding inner peace has been proven to increase feelings of calm, resilience, and coping mechanisms. Modern science has shown that the prefrontal cortex in our brains -- an area important for cognitive and emotional processing -- actually grows with repeated meditation practice. I recommend investing in a meditation pillow if resources allow and dedicating a small area to your practice, so you have a daily reminder to take time out of your day to reset.

3. FIND THE FUNNY IN YOUR DAY

Those silly cat videos? Maybe not so silly after all, because laughing is a great way to add some joy to your day. I suggest building joyful moments into your day, whether that means spending time with people who make you laugh or watching funny movies and stand-up comedy.

4. EAT HAPPY FOODS

There is a direct correlation between what you put in your body and how you feel. Eat foods you know make you feel good and energized and avoid those that trigger a sugar crash or make you want to take a nap. Studies show that people who live in the Blue Zones (the world's longest-lived cultures) follow a primarily whole food, plant-based diet. Sounds like a great place to start!

5. JUST KEEP MOVING...

Have you ever stopped to think about how good you feel post workout? Or how your mood changes after a walk amongst the trees? When you exercise, your body releases chemicals called endorphins. These endorphins trigger a positive feeling in the body and are yet another

contributing factor to feelings of happiness. I suggest moving at least four times a day. Even walking around your house during a work call will deliver benefits.

6. KEEP LEARNING. KEEP GROWING.

Learning's not just for kids! Learning increases our self-confidence, which in turn triggers pleasant emotions. There are so many ways to keep our brain active, from reading and podcasts to Ted talks and online courses. Yale University is even offering its most popular course on happiness free right now. Check it out [here](#).

7. LIVE WITH MEANING AND PURPOSE

I suggest asking yourself this question: "Am I spending time on activities or things that are meaningful to me?" That might be volunteering down at your local food bank, FaceTiming with your sister, or making sure you spend time in nature. The key is to make time for things you love, because the happiness halo effect will spill over into other areas of your life.

The truth is, life is always going to throw us some lemons here and there. The good news is, there's a real recipe for staying happy -- or making lemonade, as they say -- when it does!

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