



5 Actions to Feel Happier Right Now

Happiness is a positive emotional state that indicates general wellbeing and contentment. While it is natural to experience a range of emotions, including sadness and negativity, it is important to find moments of joy in everyday life. Finding happiness within the daily grind is achievable with mindful focus.

Here are five practical strategies to help you boost your happiness:

- 1. Prioritize Self-Care:** Carve out time for activities that rejuvenate and lift your spirits. Whether it is a walk in the park, reading a book, or practicing meditation, self-care is vital. Choose activities that nurture your wellbeing and enhance your mood and energy levels.
- 2. Cultivate Relationships:** Building and maintaining strong, supportive connections with friends, family, and colleagues can profoundly impact your happiness. Invest time in the relationships that bring you joy and provide emotional support.
- 3. Practice Gratitude:** Make a habit of acknowledging the positive aspects of your life. Daily reflection on things you are grateful for, whether big or small, can shift your focus from what is lacking to what is abundant. This can increase your overall sense of happiness.
- 4. Set Goals:** Identify personal and professional goals that excite and motivate you. Break your goals into manageable steps and celebrate small victories along the way to foster a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction.
- 5. Stay Active:** Regular exercise is not only beneficial for your physical health, but also has a significant impact on your mental wellbeing. Activities such as jogging, cycling, or yoga release endorphins, which are known as “feel-good” hormones that can boost your mood.

Happiness is not about constant cheerfulness but rather about finding balance and joy in the midst of life’s ups and downs. While positive emotions and happiness look different for everyone, pay attention to your emotions and how they affect your general wellbeing and happiness.

1. Cohn MA, Fredrickson BL, Brown SL, Mikels JA, Conway AM. Happiness unpacked: positive emotions increase life satisfaction by building resilience. *Emotion*. 2009;9(3):361-368. doi:10.1037/a0015952

2. Greater Good. “Five Science-Backed Strategies for More Happiness.” March 16, 2016. Accessed November 12, 2024. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_science_backed_strategies_for_more_happiness

3. Healthline. “How to Be Happy: 27 Habits to Add to Your Routine.” March 10, 2023. Accessed November 11, 2024. https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/five_science_backed_strategies_for_more_happiness



The Art of Gratitude

Gratitude is a simple practice that helps you recognize and appreciate what is going well in your life. Research suggests that cultivating a habit of gratitude can lead to increased happiness, stronger relationships, and even better physical health.

Here are a few ways to incorporate gratitude into your daily routines to improve your quality of life:^{1,3}

- **Start a Gratitude Journal:** Dedicate a few minutes each day to jotting down what you are grateful for. This can shift your focus away from the negatives and toward the more positive aspects of your life.²
- **Express Appreciation:** Take time to thank colleagues, friends, and family members for acts of kindness. A sincere note or a few kind words can help strengthen relationships, reinforce positive behaviors, and enhance your own emotional wellbeing.
- **Reflect on Positive Experiences:** At the end of each day, take a moment to recall the positive events or interactions you experienced. This practice can help you maintain a balanced perspective.
- **Volunteer or Help Others:** Engaging in small acts of kindness and service can provide a sense of fulfillment and boost your happiness. Helping others reinforces your own sense of gratitude and purpose.

- **Create a Gratitude Jar:** Place a jar in a visible location and fill it with notes of things you are grateful for. Regularly adding to the jar can serve as a visual reminder of the positive aspects of your life.
- **Share Gratitude with Your Team:** In a work setting, encourage a culture of appreciation by recognizing the efforts and contributions of your colleagues. This not only boosts morale but also fosters a supportive work environment.

Embracing these practices can change your outlook on life and help you cultivate more resilience and positivity. Being grateful, even in the midst of life's challenging and disappointing moments, can change the way you experience your life. Gratitude is an art that requires attention, focus, and daily practice.

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focus, and daily practice.*

1. Mindful. "How to Practice Gratitude." Accessed November 11, 2024. <https://www.mindful.org/an-introduction-to-mindful-gratitude/>

2. Calm. "How (and why) to start a gratitude journal for your wellbeing." Accessed November 11, 2024. <https://www.calm.com/blog/gratitude-journal>

3. Better Up. "What is gratitude? 12 tips for how to start a gratitude practice." January 22, 2024. Accessed November 12, 2024. <https://www.betterup.com/blog/gratitude-definition-how-to-practice>



Holiday Emotional Eating

Emotional eating occurs when you eat in response to feelings rather than physical hunger. The holidays can be particularly challenging with the uptick in family and social gatherings and abundance of food-related events.

During the holidays, several factors may contribute to emotional eating struggles:^{1,2,3}

- **Stress:** The pressures of holiday preparations, financial concerns, and family dynamics can elevate stress levels, making comfort food a tempting escape mechanism.
- **Social Influence:** Holiday parties and gatherings often feature an abundance of high-calorie comfort foods, and the social pressures to partake can lead to overindulgence.
- **Emotional Triggers:** The holidays can evoke strong emotions, including nostalgia, loneliness, or sadness, which may prompt some to seek solace in food.

Understanding your specific triggers is the first step toward managing emotional eating.

Here are several strategies to help you navigate the holiday season while maintaining a healthy relationship with food:

- **Plan Ahead:** Before attending a holiday event, have a balanced meal or snack. Not arriving hungry reduces the likelihood of overeating.
- **Practice Mindful Eating:** Pay attention to what you eat and why. Are you eating because you are hungry, or because you are bored or experiencing emotional stress? Eating slowly and mindfully can help you enjoy your food more and recognize when you are full.

- **Stay Hydrated:** Sometimes thirst is mistaken for hunger. Drinking plenty of water throughout the day can curb unnecessary snacking.
- **Set Realistic Goals:** Rather than aiming for perfection, set achievable goals for maintaining healthy eating habits. Allow yourself to enjoy treats - but in moderation.
- **Seek Support:** Share your goals with friends or family members who can offer encouragement and keep you accountable.
- **Find Alternatives:** Engage in non-food-related activities to cope with stress. Exercise, meditation, or spending time with loved ones can provide emotional support without involving food.

The holidays are a time for celebration and connection, but they do not have to be a season of excess. This year, experiment with some new strategies to ensure that you can enjoy the holidays while maintaining your health and wellbeing.



1. Healthline. "Emotional Eating: What You Should Know." September 15, 2022. Accessed November 11, 2024. <https://www.healthline.com/health/emotional-eating>
2. Psychology Today. "How to Avoid Emotional Eating Over the Holidays." December 21, 2018. Accessed November 11, 2024. <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/prescriptions-for-life/201812/how-to-avoid-emotional-eating-over-the-holidays>
3. Mayo Clinic. "Healthy for the Holidays: Mayo recommends mindful eating year-round." December 26, 2023. Accessed November 12, 2024. <https://newsnetwork.mayoclinic.org/discussion/healthy-for-the-holidays-mayo-recommends-mindful-eating-year-round/>

SPICED TURKEY BREAST WITH SWEET POTATO MASH AND GREEN BEANS



Ingredients

- 6 oz boneless, skinless turkey breast
- 1/2 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- 1/2 teaspoon ground nutmeg
- 1/2 teaspoon ground ginger
- 1/4 teaspoon ground cloves
- Salt and pepper to taste
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large sweet potato, peeled and cubed
- 1 tablespoon unsalted butter
- 1/4 cup low-fat milk (or almond milk for a dairy-free option)
- 1 cup green beans, trimmed

Instructions

1. Preheat your oven to 375°F (190°C).
2. Combine cinnamon, nutmeg, ginger, cloves, salt, and pepper to make a spice rub for the turkey breast.
3. Rub the turkey breast with olive oil, then coat it evenly with the spice mix.
4. Place the turkey in a roasting pan and cook in the oven for about 25-30 minutes or until the turkey is cooked through (internal temperature reaches 165°F/74°C).
5. In the meantime, boil the sweet potato cubes in water until tender, drain, and mash with butter and milk until smooth. Season with salt to taste.
6. Steam the green beans for about 3-4 minutes until tender but still crisp.
7. Once the turkey is cooked, let it rest for a few minutes before slicing.
8. Serve the sliced turkey alongside the sweet potato mash and steamed green beans.

Nutrition Facts (approximate):

Calories: 500 kcal

Protein: 45 g

Carbohydrates: 40 g

Dietary Fiber: 7 g

Sugars: 9 g

Fat: 14 g

Saturated Fat: 4 g

Cholesterol: 95 mg

Sodium: 300 mg



Express Gratitude

Choose a gratitude strategy and make it a point to practice it at least once a day. Keep gratitude at top of mind each day by keeping a gratitude journal, setting aside time for a gratitude meditation, telling someone how grateful you are that they are in your life, or extending some other gesture of gratitude.

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