

5 Easy Ways to Happiness!

How can you increase your happiness in just 21 days?

According to Shawn Achor, a New York Times bestselling author on the research of happiness and one of the world's leading experts on the connection between happiness and success, there are five very short habits that will improve your levels of happiness if you do them for 21-days. It's best to do each of them each day, but just doing one for 21-days will significantly increase your happiness.

1. Practice Gratitude

Spend two minutes a day scanning the world for three new things you're grateful for. The reason why that's powerful is you're training your brain to scan the world in a new pattern, you're scanning for positives, instead of scanning for threats. It's the fastest way of teaching optimism. This only works if you're scanning for new things and you're very specific. If you say, "I'm grateful for my son," it doesn't work. But if you say, "I'm grateful for my son because he hugged me today, which means I'm loved regardless," that specificity gets the brain stuck in a new pattern of optimism

2. Journaling a Positive Experience

For two minutes a day, think of one positive experience that's occurred during the past 24-hours. Bullet point each detail you can remember. It works because the brain can't tell the difference between visualization and actual experience, so you've just doubled the most meaningful experience in your brain.

3. The Fun Fifteen

Do 15-minutes of cardiovascular exercise a day. It's the equivalent of taking an anti-depressant for the first six months, but with a 30 percent lower relapse rate over the next two years. This is not a repudiation of anti-depressants. It's an indication that exercise works, because your brain records a victory, and that cascades to the next activity. And the best exercise to do? Dancing! Research has proven that people who dance long into their later years have better cognitive abilities and health!

4. Mindfulness/Breathing for 2 Minutes

Take your hands off your keyboard or smart phone for two minutes a day. Go from multitasking to simply watching your breath go in and out. This raises accuracy rates. Improves levels of happiness. Drops your stress levels. And it takes two minutes.

5. Conscious Acts of Kindness

The final habit is the most powerful one. For two minutes each day, start your day, at home or at work, writing a two-minute positive e-mail or text praising or thanking one person you know. And do it for a different person each day. People who do this not only get great e-mails and texts back, they are also perceived as positive people. The key: it has to be heartfelt.

