



Wellness Booster Kit

© 2014 Anne Brafford, Sandra Adkins, Jill Sanford

Books

Loving Kindness: The Revolutionary Art of Happiness by Sharon Salzberg

Learned Optimism by Martin Seligman

The Mindful Way through Depression by Mark Williams, et al.

A Mindfulness Based Stress Reduction Workbook by Bob Stahl, et al.

Mindfulness: Finding Peace in a Frantic World by Mark Williams, et al.

The Resilience Factor: 7 Keys to Finding Your Inner Strength and Overcoming Life's Hurdles by Karen Reivich and Andrew Shatte

[TED Talks: www.ted.com](http://www.ted.com)

Jane McGonigal on "The game that can give you 10 extra years of life"

Kelly McGonigal on "How to make stress your friend"

Andy Puddicombe: "All it takes is 10 mindful minutes"

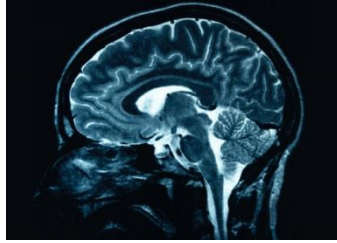
Web Resources:

www.positivityratio.com see "on-line tools" for meditations

www.tarabrach.com see "guided meditations"

www.happify.com see tracks on "Conquer Your Negative Thoughts," "Cope Better with Stress," and "Find Peace Now: Reduce Stress, Relieve Anxiety"

www.superbetter.com see power packs "Mind Master," "Realistic Optimism," "Stress Buster," and "Mental Resilience."



Healthy Mind

"We don't see things as they are, we see things as we are." -- Anaïs Nin,

The demands of law school can sometimes leave you feeling overwhelmed and maybe a little depressed. Fortunately, there are effective techniques to calm down your mind and build your resilience.

Mindfulness is a technique that cultivates the skill of being present by focusing attention on your breath and detaching from your thoughts or feelings. The skill will help minimize the tendency to rehash the past or anxiously rehearse the future. Research on the positive impact of mindfulness is convincing. It indicates that mindfulness can help deter rumination, improve attention, and reduce depression and anxiety (Teper, et al., 2013; Huffziger & Kuehner, 2009). See the sidebar to learn more about mindfulness meditation and breathing.

Also effective for improving resilience is learning the "**ABC model**" to tackle negative thoughts by helping you to more accurately assess adverse events. Studies reflect that learning the ABC model helps prevent depression (Reivich, & Shatte, 2002; Gilham, et al., 2007).

The ABC model is fully described in *The Resilience Factor*, noted in the sidebar. Briefly, the ABC model starts when an "**A**ctivating event" (or **A**dversity) strikes, such as being called on in class when you're not prepared. How do you feel when that happens? Anxious? Embarrassed? Why do you feel that way? It's obvious, right? The professor has just called your name. *Not so fast.* It's not actually the Adversity that causes the negative feelings. Rather, it's your **B**eliefs or thoughts about the event (e.g., I'm going to be humiliated and everyone will think I don't belong in law school) that create **C**onsequences, such as anxiety or embarrassment. Many people mistakenly believe that the external adverse event causes an emotional reaction. But, actually, we impose our own interpretation on the adversity, and that's what causes an emotional reaction. By slowing down and identifying the beliefs/thoughts that have been triggered by the adversity, we then have a chance to make a decision to think and act differently. We prevent an emotional hijacking by challenging the accuracy of negative thoughts, which increase resilience.



Healthy Body

While building a healthy body through **physical activity**, you also will be enhancing your happiness. Research showing the link between physical activity and psychological well-being is truly convincing. For example, studies reflect that exercise can be as effective at relieving depression as antidepressant medication (Chu, et al., 2009). Progressive success in physical exercise also may improve a sense of competency, optimism, and self-esteem, which all are linked to well-being (Mutrie & Faulkner, 2004). Both aerobic activity (e.g., running/walking) and resistance training (e.g., lifting weights) have psychological benefits (Herring, Jacob, Suveg, & O'Connor, 2011).

Specifically, **yoga** has been linked to enhanced mindfulness and reductions in anxiety, fatigue, and sleep disruptions (Field, 2011; Chugh-Gupta, Baldassare, & Vrkljan, 2013).

Also try to move your physical activity **outdoors** where you can experience nature. Studies show that being in nature is linked to feelings of positive emotion, increased self-esteem, and enhanced attention and cognitive functioning (Kamitsis & Francis, 2013; Johansson, et al., 2011).

Adding more physical activity to your day is among the easiest ways to enhance your happiness. Research suggests that the optimal volume of physical activity for mental health benefits is between 2.5 to 7.5 hours per week (Kim, et al., 2012). You have so many options to work more activity into your life: Join an on-campus yoga group, walk to class, walk around the library with a friend during a study break, lift weights, take the stairs, dance wildly to your favorite song. Sneak it in wherever you can. Consider the benefits of even micro-changes—a few minutes here and there can add up to large gains in your physical and psychological wellness.

“Those who think they have no time for exercise will sooner or later have to find time for illness.”

Edward Stanley

Books:

Eat Move Sleep: How Small Choices Lead to Big Changes by Tom Rath

Mindful Movements: Ten Exercises for Well-Being by Thich Nhat Hanh

Positive Psychology & the Body by Kate Hefferon & Ilona Boniwell

Spark: The Revolutionary New Science of Exercise and the Brain by John Ratey & Eric Hagerman

TED Talks: www.ted.com

Dan Buettner on “How to live to be 100+”

Russell Foster on “Why do we sleep?”

Web Resources:

www.eatmovesleep.org personalized eat, move, sleep plan

www.sparkinglife.org exercise and optimal brain functioning

www.happify.com see tracks on “Nurture Your Body and Soul,” and “Get Motivated to Get Fit”

www.superbetter.com see power packs “Lazy Exercise,” “Rest Easy,” “Your Body Rocks,” “The Power to Quit Anything,” and “Better than a Chill Pill”

Books:*Daring Greatly* by Brene Brown*The Happiness Project* by Gretchen Rubin*The How of Happiness* by Sonja Lyubomirsky*Love 2.0* by Barbara Fredrickson*Positivity* by Barbara Fredrickson**TED Talks: www.ted.com:**

Hannah Brencher on "Love letters to strangers"

Yann Dall'Aglio on "Love—you're doing it wrong"

Barbara Fredrickson on "Remaking Love"

Matthieu Ricard "The habits of happiness"

David Steindl-Rast on "Want to be happy? Be grateful"

Web Resources:www.positivityresonance.comwww.randomactsofkindness.orgwww.soulpancake.comwww.happify.com see tracks on "The Power of Positive Communication," "Feel More Fulfilled with Your Relationship," "Strengthen Your Friendships," "Appreciate What You Have," and "Be More Socially Connected"www.superbetter.com see power packs "Absurdly Grateful," "Emotional Resilience," "Social Resilience," and "Simply Connected"

Healthy Heart

Among the best supported findings in the scientific study of well-being is surprisingly simple: *Other people matter*. People need **relationships** to flourish. Research has unequivocally shown that close relationships are strongly linked to health and well-being, including reductions in the perception of stressors and anxiety (Gable & Gosnell, 2011). But what's the first thing to get the shaft when you get busy studying? Time spent with your friends and family? When this happens, the circles of your life become smaller and smaller—and the risk of depression and burnout gets greater and greater. Therefore, make personal relationships a priority. Create rituals, such as Wednesday pizza night with friends. Call your parents. Email your college friends. *Just stay connected.*

A fun way to connect with others is by performing **acts of kindness**. There is much evidence to suggest that doing so decreases negative emotions and stress and improves happiness, self-evaluations, and social relationships (Tkach, 2005). The most effective way to boost happiness through acts of kindness is to choose a variety of acts and to do a bunch of kind acts all on one day. Spreading kind acts out across the week dilutes the effect compared to, for example, choosing one day to really focus on kindness (Lyubomirsky and Layous, 2013; Lyubomirsky, et al., 2005). So consider incorporating Thoughtful Thursdays or Friendly Fridays into your schedules.

A way to prolong the positive effects of connecting with others is to engage in **savoring**, which also contributes to positive emotion (Eisner, Johnson, & Carver, 2009). Increasing positive emotion can help undo the cumulative impact of negative events (Fredrickson, 2000).

Savoring means to actively replay positive events in your mind and continue to think or talk about positive events. Check out *The How of Happiness* noted in the sidebar for more suggestions about savoring.

"The greatest thing you'll ever learn is just to love and be loved in return."

- Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec

References

- Chu, I-H. , Buckworth, J., Kirby, T. E., & Emery, C. F. (2009). Effect of exercise intensity on depressive symptoms in women. *Mental Health and Physical Activity*, 2(1), 37-43.
- Chugh-Gupta, N., Baldassare, F. G., & Vrkljan, B. H. (2013). A systematic review of yoga for state anxiety: Considerations for occupational therapy. *Canadian Journal of Occupational Therapy*, 80(3), 150-170.
- Dalebroux, A., Goldstein, T. R., & Winner, E. (2008). Short-term mood repair through art-making: Positive emotion is more effective than venting. *Motivation and Emotion*, 32, 288-295.
- Eisner, L. R., Johnson, S. L., & Carver, C. S. (2009). Positive affect regulation in anxiety disorders. *J. Anxiety Disord.*, 23(5), 645-649.
- Field, T. (2011). Yoga clinical research review. *Complementary Therapies in Clinical Practice*, 17, 1-8.
- Fredrickson, B. L. (2000). Cultivating positive emotions to optimize health and well-being. *Prevention & Treatment*, 3(1).
- Gable, S. L., & Gosnell, C. L. (2011). *The positive side of close relationships*. (pp. 265-279). Oxford University Press, New York, NY.
- Gilham, J. E., Reivich, K. J., Freres, D. R., Chaplin, T. M., Shatte, A. J., Samuels, B., Elkon, A. G. L., Litzinger, S., Lascher, M., Gallop, R., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2007). School-based prevention of depressive symptoms: A randomized controlled study of the effectiveness and specificity of the Penn resiliency program. *Journal of Consulting and Clinical Psychology*, 75(1), 9-19.
- Herring, M. P., Jacob, M. L., Suveg, C., & O'Connor, P. J. (2011). Effects of short-term exercise training on signs and symptoms of generalized anxiety disorder. *Mental Health and Physical Activity*, 4, 71-77.
- Huffziger, S., & Kuehner, C. (2009). Rumination, distraction, and mindful self-focus in depressed patients. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 47(3), 224-230.
- Johansson, M., Hartig, T., & Staats, H. (2011). Psychological benefits of walking: Moderation by company and outdoor environment. *Applied Psychology: Health and Well-Being*, 3(3), 261-280.
- Kamitsis, I., & Francis, A. J. P. (2013). Spirituality mediates the relationship between engagement with nature and psychological wellbeing. *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 36, 136-143.
- Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K. M., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. *Review of General Psychology*, 9, 111-131.
- Lyubomirsky, S. & Layous, K. (2013). How do simple positive activities increase well-being? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(1), 57-62.

- Teper, R., Segal, Z. V., & Inzlicht, M. (2013). Inside the mindful mind: How mindfulness enhances emotion regulation through improvements in executive control. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(6), 449-454.
- Tkach, C. T. (2006). *Unlocking the treasury of human kindness: Enduring improvements in mood, happiness, and self-evaluations*. (Order No. AAI3204031, *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, 603. Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/621589961?accountid=14707>. (621589961; 2006-99014-307).
- Reivich, K. & Shatte, A. (2002). *The resilience factor: 7 Essential skills for overcoming life's inevitable obstacles*. New York, NY: Broadway Books.
- Smith, A. P., Chaplin, K., & Wadsworth, E. (2012). Chewing gum, occupational stress, work performance and wellbeing. An intervention study. *Appetite*, 58(3), 1083-1086.

Happiness Activity Worksheets

Take Control Of Your Happiness. While biology may account for 50% of our happiness, life circumstances (10%) and factors within our voluntary control (40%) account for the remainder (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon, & Schkade, 2005). This is good news. It means that even those born with gloomy genes have control over factors that can significantly increase their well-being.

To help get you started on new habits to improve your happiness, below you'll find worksheets that provide more specific instructions to carry out several happiness activities.

Test Your Results. To test whether the activities increase your happiness, try this: Before you start any of the activities, take a happiness survey. Then repeat the survey in six-week intervals and keep track of your results. You might find your happiness levels perking up! A good survey to use is the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985). You can take it for free here: <http://www.excelatlife.com/questionnaires/swls.htm>. The SWLS is a short 5-item survey that usually requires only about one minute to take.

If you're concerned about depression, you also should consider taking the Center for Epidemiological Studies-Depression Scale (CES-D). You can take this survey for free here: <http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx>.

References

- Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 49, 71-75.
- Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. *Review of General Psychology*, 9, 111-131.

Thankful Thursdays

Tally Up The Good Stuff

"Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it."
- William Arthur Ward



Because how you *think* about yourself and everything around you is more important to your happiness than your actual objective circumstances, increasing your attention to all the good things in your life (large and small) can significantly enhance your happiness. Multiple studies have shown the positive power of gratitude (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; Lyubomirsky, Sheldon et al., 2005; Sheldon & Lyubomirsky, 2006). People who are consistently grateful have been found to be happier; more energetic; and less depressed, anxious, or envious (Lyubomirsky, 2008).

One well-tested activity is to take time once a week to write down three or more things for which you're grateful. Studies have shown that people who do this activity for six weeks markedly increase their happiness (Lyubomirsky, Sheldon et al., 2005). But it's also important to vary your gratitude activities so that you don't get bored. The good effects can wear off after while if you do the same activity all the time. Below is a list of different gratitude activities for you to try. Pick one day each week to do your gratitude activity—e.g., Thankful Thursdays. And then pick an activity. Try one for three or more weeks and then switch to another.

1. **Keep a Gratitude Journal.** Once a week, think about everything—large and small—for which you are thankful (e.g., got called on in class and were prepared, roommate made a delicious dinner, tulips are blooming). Think about things you're good at, advantages you've had, people who care about you and have touched your life. Then pick three to five things and write a brief note about them. Try out a gratitude journal website or smart phone app (e.g., My Gratitude Journal by Happytapper), which will send you regular reminders.
2. **Appreciative Art.** Engage in something artistic to express your gratitude to another. Draw or paint a picture, make a collage, sculpt with clay, etc. Or write a poem, a song, or a story. Studies indicate that art-creation boosts mood (Dalebroux, Goldstein, & Winner, 2008). Evidence suggests that art-making that depicted something happy was more effective at improving short-term mood than using art to vent negative emotions (Dalebroux et al., 2008). Evidence also indicates that a variety of different art-making activities (e.g., drawing, painting, collage-making, clay work, etc.) may reduce anxiety (Sandmire, Gorham, Rankin & Grimm, 2012). So, engaging in an appreciative art activity may give you benefits both from artistic engagement and from your grateful thinking.
3. **Selfless-ies.** Taking and sharing "selfies" is popular, but try this too: For a week, keep a look-out for every-day things for which you're grateful (e.g., your dog, a warm garage in winter, dinner with friends, your baby sister) and take photos of them. At the end of the week, post them all on your favorite social networking website with fun notes. Research shows that sharing good things with

others (the more the better) actually increases your enjoyment of them (Gable & Reis, 2004; Gable & Gosnell, 2011). So share your photos with friends and explain why you took them.

4. **Gratitude Letters.** Think about the people to whom you owe a debt of gratitude—a family member, old friends, a special teacher or coach, a good boss. Write a letter expressing your gratitude and, if you can, visit that person and read it aloud or call them on the phone. Describe in detail what they did for you and how they affected your life. You might even write a letter to people who are helpful everyday but whom you don't know—e.g., postal carrier, garbage removers, bus drivers, politicians, authors. You might also choose to write a letter but then not deliver it. One study showed that participants who spent 15 minutes writing gratitude letters once a week over an eight-week period became happier during and after the study (Lyubomirsky, 2008). Check out this fun video from Soul Pancake showing real-life results from the gratitude letter activity:
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oHv6vTKD6lg>.
5. **Gratitude Jar.** Decorate a jar or other container and invite others to drop notes in whenever someone does something helpful. Then read the notes aloud once a week. Use this activity with your roommates, classmates, family, team members, work colleagues—any group that spends significant time together.

References

- Dalebroux, A., Goldstein, T. R., & Winner, E. (2008). Short-term mood repair through art-making: Positive emotion is more effective than venting. *Motivation and Emotion*, 32, 288-295.
- Emmons, R. A., & McCullough, M. E. (2003). Counting blessings versus burdens: An experimental investigation of gratitude and subjective well-being in daily life. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84, 377-389.
- Gable, S. L., Reis, H. T., Impett, E., & Asher, E. R. (2004). What do you do when things go right? The intrapersonal and interpersonal benefits of sharing positive events. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87, 228-245.
- Gable, S. L. & Gosnell, C. L. (2011). The positive side of close relationships. In K. M. Sheldon, T. B. Kashdan, & M. F. Steger (Eds.), *Designing positive psychology: Taking stock and moving forward* (pp. 265-279). New York: Oxford University Press.
- Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. *Review of General Psychology*, 9, 111-131.
- Sheldon, K. M., & Lyubomirsky, S. (2006). How to increase and sustain positive emotion: The effects of expressing gratitude and visualizing best possible selves. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 1, 73-82.

Use Your Strengths

“The idea of recognizing your strengths and using them in as versatile a way as you can is cool to me.” – Frank Ocean



Identify Your Character Strengths

To get started, you'll first need to identify your strengths by taking the VIA Survey: <http://www.viacharacter.org/Survey/Account/Register>.

The VIA Survey (VIA-IS) measures 24 character strengths. The results are simply a rank order of the strengths within you, not against anyone else. Also, the survey isn't measuring strengths which you value the most; it's measuring the strengths that you report as most often showing up in your actions and thoughts. It's an effective way to identify your own strengths, which you then can use to spur your thinking about how to use those strengths more and in new ways to improve your happiness and to help make the world a better place.

VIA Classification

- The VIA-IS is based on the VIA Classification, which resulted from an extensive 3-year research project. Researchers explored the best thinking from all over the world on virtue and positive human qualities in philosophy, virtue ethics, moral education, psychology, and theology over the past 2500 years.¹
- Six core themes emerged, which were found across religions, cultures, nations, and belief systems. These “virtues” were subdivided into 24 universal character strengths:
 - **Wisdom:** Creativity, curiosity, judgment/open-mindedness, love of learning, perspective
 - **Courage:** Bravery, perseverance, honesty
 - **Justice:** Teamwork, fairness, and leadership
 - **Humanity:** Love, kindness, and social intelligence
 - **Temperance:** Forgiveness, humility, prudence, and self-regulation
 - **Transcendence:** Appreciation of beauty and excellence, gratitude, hope, humor, spirituality, and zest
- These by no means exhaust all human character strengths, but they are the ones that were found to be universal across cultures. Americans value their own set of idiosyncratic strengths (such as achievement) that are not universally valued across cultures.

¹ The scientists who led the research project and who authored the VIA Classification are Christopher Peterson and Martin E. P. Seligman. See Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). *Character strengths and virtues: A handbook and classification*. New York: Oxford University Press and Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

What is Character?

- Character strengths are stable, universal personality traits that show themselves in how you think, feel, and behave. They are considered to be the basic building blocks of human goodness and flourishing.

Identifying Signature Strengths

- “Signature strengths” are your top character strengths that really resonate with you and feel like they are at the core of who you are (Peterson, 2006).

Interpreting the VIA-IS Report

- The VIA-IS report is about your *strengths*. It doesn’t measure weaknesses or problems. So, lower strengths still are strengths.
- The VIA Survey measures your view of yourself, not facts about your character.
- These results are broad brushstrokes. So don’t sweat the details.

Using Signature Strengths

- Character strengths are not fixed or stagnant; they can be developed. Most people likely can enhance their capacity for expressing each of the 24 character strengths.
- Studies have shown that using your signature strengths more or in new ways can improve well-being. Regularly using strengths is linked to work satisfaction and engagement at work, lower turnover, greater psychological well-being, less stress, goal achievement, and lower depression levels as much as 6 months after participating in a strengths-based exercise (Biswas-Diener, Kashdan, & Gurpal, 2012).
- Two of the most important predictors of employee retention and satisfaction are: Reporting use of your top strengths at work and that your immediate supervisor recognizes your top strengths.
- Character strengths buffer people from the negative effects of vulnerabilities (e.g., perfectionism and need for approval) and play an important role in depression recovery.
- As you learn more about your 24 strengths, you can begin to develop your competence in using them all in the right proportion that each situation calls for. This can improve your interpersonal effectiveness and other aspects of personal performance and sense of well-being (Biswas-Diener, Kashdan, & Gurpal, 2012).

Now that you’ve identified your character strengths, it’s time to put them into action...

Putting Your Signature Strengths Into Action

1. **Think of a specific time when you were at your best—when you really were feeling and behaving at a high level and you felt that you were being your authentic self. Write a description of that time.**

2. **List your top seven strengths according to the VIA-IS.**

Strength 1:

Strength 5:

Strength 2:

Strength 6:

Strength 3:

Strength 7:

Strength 4

3. **Identify your signature strengths.**

Signature strengths are those strengths that you easily recognize in yourself, regularly exercise, and celebrate. You feel that they describe the “real me.” You have a rapid learning curve and feel joy and enthusiasm when using them (Peterson & Seligman, 2004; Seligman, 2011). Review your top strengths from the VIA-IS, and ask the following questions:

- Is this strength who the real, authentic you? Does it come naturally to you? Is it easy for you to express? Do you feel more energized when you’re using this strength?
- Would your family and friends be quick to identify this strength in you?
- Do you use this strength frequently at home, at work, and in your social life?
- What character strengths have you used in your past and current successes?
- When you’re happiest, what strengths are you using?

4. **Of your top seven strengths, which do you identify as your signature strengths? Often, people identify three signature strengths, but you may have more or less.**

Signature Strength 1:

Signature Strength 4:

Signature Strength 2:

Signature Strength 5:

Signature Strength 3:

5. **What was your initial reaction to the results of the survey?**
6. **Did anything from your survey results surprise you? If so, why?**

7. **What strengths can you identify in the story of you at your best (Question No. 1)?**
8. **Which one of your signature strengths seems most evident in your every-day life right now?**
9. **What are examples of how you use that strength now?**
10. **Using your signature strengths.**
 - Our work doesn't end with identifying our strengths! Having strengths and values in the abstract is not enough to flourish. What we *do* makes the difference (Peterson, 2006). According to Seligman (2002) and Peterson (2006), the regular use of signature strengths—especially in service to others—cultivates well-being.
 - A good place to start is with a well-tested exercise in which you pick a signature strength and, for the next week, use it in a new way every day (Peterson, 2006; Seligman & Peterson, 2005).
 - The strengths of hope, zest, gratitude, curiosity, and love, have the strongest link to life satisfaction (Park, Peterson, & Seligman, 2004). So you might consider them as top targets if they are among your signature strengths.
 - For ideas on activities that incorporate your signature strengths, take the Person-Activity Fit Diagnostic test developed by Sonja Lyubomirsky (2008). You'll likely find that such activities improve your well-being through engagement.
11. **What are three ways in which you can use your signature strength more or in a new way in the next three weeks to help you progress toward something important to you? For ideas, review *340 Ways to Use VIA Character Strengths* (Rashid & Anjum, 2008).**
 - 1.
 - 2.
 - 3.

References

- Biswas-Diener, R., Kashdan, T. B., & Gorpall, M. (2011). A dynamic approach to psychological strength development and intervention. *The Journal of Positive Psychology, 6*(2): 106-118.
- Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). *The how of happiness: A scientific approach to getting the life you want*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Niemiec, R. M. (2013). VIA character strengths: Research and practice (The first 10 years). In H.H. Knoop & A. Delle Fave (Eds.), *Well-being and cultures: Perspectives on positive psychology* (pp. 11-30). New York: Springer.
- Park, N., Peterson, C., & Seligman, M. E. P. (2004). Strengths of character and well-being. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology, 23*(5): 603-619.
- Peterson, C. (2006). *A primer in positive psychology*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Rashid, T. & Anjum, A. (2008). 340 Ways to Use VIA Character Strengths. Retrieved from <http://www.viastrengths.org/Applications/Exercises/tabid/132/Default.aspx>.
- Seligman, M. (2002). *Authentic happiness*. New York: Free Press.
- Seligman, M.E.P. (2011). *Flourish: A visionary new understanding of happiness and well-being*. New York: Free Press.
- Seligman, M. E. P. & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive psychology progress: Empirical validation of interventions. Retrieved from <http://www.ppc.sas.upenn.edu/articleseligman.pdf>.

Get Moving!



*“There are really only two requirements when it comes to exercise.
One is that you do it. The other is that you continue to do it.”*
–The New Glucose Revolution for Diabetes by Jennie Brand-Miller et al.

There now is convincing research supporting what we already know but have a hard time implementing: *Physical activity is really good for us.* And to reap psychological benefits from exercise, you don’t need a strenuous routine. Moderate intensity exercise of at least 30 minutes on most days of the week is linked to greater psychological well-being (Mota-Pereria, et al., 2011; Ströhle, 2009). The optimal goal would be to engage in physical activity between 2.5 to 7.5 hours per week (Kim, et al., 2012).

Set a Specific, Challenging Goal

Setting specific, challenging goals will improve your likelihood of success (Latham & Locke, 2006; Locke, 1996). Quantifying your goals (e.g., increase daily steps by 20%) also increases your likelihood of success (Locke, 1996). A popular activity goal is to strive for 10,000 steps per day—which is approximately five miles. A good article to get you started on a 10,000-step program can be found here: <http://www.shapeup.org/resources/10ksteps.html>.

Set Implementation Strategies

Identifying how you will implement your goal (when, where, how) also will improve your chances of success (Gollwitzer, 1999). Really commit to your plan!

- Start date of activity plan:
- At what time of day will I engage in my activity:
- Where will I engage in my activity:
- With whom will I engage in my activity:

Buy a Step-Tracker and Boost Your Activity By 20% Per Week

A realistic way to get started on a 10,000-step program is to build up your steps by 20% per week. First, buy a pedometer, smart phone app, FitBit or similar device to count your steps. Then just follow the simple program below. The first week, don't change your exercise habits at all; just learn your baseline average daily step total. For the next two weeks, try to boost that average by 20%.

Week 1: Track Your Baseline

In Week 1, don't try to walk more than normal. This is the baseline week. Each morning, reset the pedometer to "0." Set it to show steps. Wear it all day. At night remove it, record the number of steps you've taken in the log, and note if you did any formal exercise. Also note if anything caused more (walked to football game) or fewer (all-day meeting) steps than usual in your day.

Week 1 Log

Date:	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Steps today							
Minutes of Exercise							
More/less than usual							

Week 2: Add 20% More Steps

Your goal is to boost your average daily steps by 20%. Add the total steps taken in week one and divide by seven. Then multiply by 1.2. The result is your new target number for daily steps.

Add steps for all seven days:

Divide by 7:

Multiply by 1.2: (This is your goal for week #2.)

So, if you averaged 3,000 steps a day in week one, try for 3,600 a day in week two. How you reach your goal is up to you. Most physical activity counts, including formal workouts (a brisk walk, using most exercise machines) and informal exercise (taking the stairs instead of the elevator or even pacing on the subway platform).

Week 2 Log

Date:	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Steps today							
Minutes of Exercise							
More/less than usual							

Week 3: Add 20% More Steps

If you haven't reached 10,000 steps, then boost your steps again by 20%. Calculate your second week's daily average and multiply by 1.2. If aerobic fitness is a goal, try boosting the speed of at least 2,000 to 4,000 of the steps you're already doing.

Week 3 Log

Date:	Mon	Tues	Weds	Thurs	Fri	Sat	Sun
Steps today							
Minutes of Exercise							
More/less than usual							

Week 4 & Beyond

Some people find that just with three weeks of effort they've gotten their daily step average close to or beyond 10,000. But many find it takes several more weeks of boosting by 20% each week until they can create a 10,000 step-per-day habit. Baby steps count! Even if you only try for 10% more each week, you'll soon find that your days are full of opportunities for more steps.

References

100,000-step program schedule adapted from America's Walking, Personal Health & Fitness. Retrieved from <http://www.pbs.org/americaswalking/health/health20percentboost.html>.

Gollwitzer, P. M. (1999). Implementation intentions. *The American Psychologist*, 54(7), 493-503.

Latham, G. P. & Locke, E. A. (2006). Enhancing the benefits and overcoming the pitfalls of goal setting. *Organizational Dynamics*, 35(4), 332-340.

Locke, E. (1996). Motivation through conscious goal setting. *Applied & Preventive Psychology*, 5, 117-124.



Friendly Fridays

Acts of Kindness

“Three things in human life are important: the first is to be kind; the second is to be kind; and the third is to be kind.” - Henry James

Scientific studies have shown that doing acts of kindness for others is not just helpful to them, it’s also good for your own well-being (Lyubomirsky, et al., 2005). There are a number of ways to maximize your happiness from acts of kindness:

- People typically get a bigger boost to their happiness when they do a bunch of smaller acts of kindness or one big act of kindness all on one day rather than spread out over a week (Lyubomirsky, et al., 2005). So consider adopting “Friendly Fridays” (or whatever day of the week you like) to shower those around you with kindness.
- Your acts of kindness should be of your own choosing and not overly disruptive to your life (Della Porta, 2012).
- Variety is important. Shake it up so that you don’t grow tired of your chosen acts of kindness. You’re more likely to sustain the benefits of doing acts of kindness when you vary your activities (Lyubomirsky & Layous, 2013).
- Your acts of kindness should be new and outside of your routine activities.
- Keep a kindness journal. Record your planned acts of kindnesses and reflect on the experience. There’s evidence that counting your own acts of kindness contributes to increases in happiness (Otake, Shimani, Tanaka-Matsumi, Otusi, & Fredrickson, 2006).
- Carry out your kindness activities mindfully. Put yourself in the other persons’ shoes and consider the impact of your actions on their lives (Lyubomirsky, 2007).
- Remember that acts of kindness are not all about receiving approval and admiration. Consider doing at least one act of kindness per week anonymously. Giving for kindness’ sake can reap tremendous rewards.

Examples of Acts of Kindnesses

Acts of kindnesses can be big or small. What is important is that they be a part of your kindness intention. Below is a list of ideas for your Friendly Friday activities (Lyubomirsky, 2007). You’ll want to design activities that feel authentic for you.

- Shop for a sick friend.
- Stop to give a tourist directions.
- Feed a stranger’s parking meter.

- Donate blood.
- Read aloud to someone.
- Write a letter of admiration.
- Buy lunch for a friend.
- Visit a nursing home.
- Donate your time in a soup kitchen.

References

- Della Porta, M. D. (2013). Enhancing the effects of happiness-boosting activities: The role of autonomy support in an experimental longitudinal intervention. *Dissertation Abstracts International: Section B: The Sciences and Engineering*, Order No. AAI3518646, Retrieved from <http://search.proquest.com/docview/1426228539?accountid=14707>.
- Lyubomirsky, S. & Layous, K. (2013). How do simple positive activities increase well-being? *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 22(1), 57-62.
- Lyubomirsky, S., Sheldon, K. M., & Schkade, D. (2005). Pursuing happiness: The architecture of sustainable change. *Review of General Psychology*, 9, 111-131.
- Lyubomirsky, S. (2007). *The how of happiness: A new approach to getting the life you want*. New York: Penguin Press.
- Otake, K., Shimai, S., Tanaka-Matsumi, J., Otsui, K., Fredrickson, B. (2006). Happy People Become Happier Through Kindness: A Counting Kindnesses Intervention. *Journal of Happiness Studies* 7, 361-375.



Now it's time to create your own Happiness Plan. Keep your goals specific and manageable. Start anywhere and be creative in adapting these ideas to best suit you. Micro-changes matter!

1. Goals for investment in social connections.

- What amount of time each week/month will you commit to family and friends? What will you do with that time? Create rituals, e.g., lunch with friends twice per month; call parents every two weeks; study break with classmates; run/walk/bike with friends on Saturdays; send birthday and holiday cards; write letters; make plans to see a friend you've lost touch with.

2. Goals for practicing kindness.

- Adopt "Thoughtful Thursdays." Pick one day each week to commit a special and large act of kindness or, alternatively, three to five little ones. Vary what you do.

3. Goals for exercise & good health.

- What amount of time each week/month will you commit to physical activity? Schedule regular exercise: Walk 40 minutes 5 days/week; walk/ride bike to class; take stairs; wear pedometer and strive for 10,000 steps/day; lift weights; swim; hike in nature; go skiing; meditation, yoga.

4. Goals for expressing gratitude.

- Once a month, prepare a gratitude letter to someone who has touched your life. Go see them/call them and read it to them.
- Keep a gratitude journal in a diary or a smart phone app. Write down things for what you're grateful. Start out doing it every day, then move to once a week.

5. Goals for using your character strengths in new ways.

- After identifying your signature strengths through the VIA Survey, identify new ways to use those strengths each week in various domains of your life.