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# 9 Quick Tips You Can Do to Get Happy in the Next 30 Minutes

April 14, 2016 | 32,248 views

By Dr. Mercola

When you're in the midst of your daily grind — to-do lists, work deadlines, cooking, cleaning, children's activities and the like — you're probably not thinking about what you could do to feel happier. There's no *time* for that, and your mind is probably occupied with more important, or at least more *pressing*, matters. But if you *do* stop to think about it, few things are more important than [happiness](#). If you're living day to day simply by going through the motions, you're missing out on living — you're missing out on *life*. The good news is that it's relatively easy to feel happier. It's a choice virtually everyone can make, and you can work toward it just like you would any other goal. The first step is making this choice — go ahead, do it now. Next, try some of the simple happiness-boosting tips that follow.

## 9 Tips to Get a Quick Mood Boost

### 1. Get Up and Get Moving

Excessive sitting and lack of exercise increase depression symptoms while increased physical activity may alleviate such symptoms and possibly even prevent future symptoms. On the other hand, anandamide (AEA), a neurotransmitter known as the “bliss compound,” increases during and following exercise and may be partly responsible for why [exercise makes you happy](#).

### 2. Get Outdoors

Exposure to bright outdoor light is crucial for a positive mood, in part because regular exposure to sunlight helps to enhance your mood and energy through the release of endorphins. Getting sun exposure outdoors will also help you optimize your [vitamin D](#) levels. Vitamin D deficiency has long been associated with seasonal affective disorder (SAD), as well as chronic depression. One study found that it takes just 20 minutes outdoors to make most people happier, while other research showed that happiness is maximized when it's 57 degrees F outside — so keep an eye on the thermometer! If you can't get outdoors, at least open your shades and let the sunshine in. A brighter living or work area will help to boost your mood.

### **3. Reach Out to Others**

Call a friend or even send a friendly email. This will help you build a closer bond with others in the long run, and strong social ties are key for well being. One study even found that relationships are worth more than \$100,000 in terms of life satisfaction, while actual changes in income buy very little happiness. Even better, give or get a hug. Hugging is known to lower levels of stress hormones like cortisol. Hugging also activates the orbitofrontal cortex in your brain, which is linked to feelings of reward and compassion.

### **4. Complete a Task You've Been Avoiding**

Often, the build-up to doing the aversive task is worse than actually doing it. And once you've crossed it off your to-do list, you'll feel a sense of accomplishment and relief.

### **5. Organize and De-clutter**

A cluttered, disorganized environment can lead to inner discord. Set your timer for 10 minutes and tackle one spot that you wish was clear of clutter (like your kitchen counter or desk).

### **6. Do a Good Deed**

Helping others and doing good deeds provide a natural mood boost. Even a quick good deed, like letting someone go ahead of you in line at the grocery store, is beneficial, but if you have more time volunteering is also great for your mood. Volunteering can lower your risk of depression and anxiety, and even boost your psychological well-being. Not only does it keep you active and on your feet, but there's a definite social aspect as well, both of which contribute to happiness. Volunteering to help others also gives you a sense of purpose and can even lead to a so-called "helper's high," which may occur because doing good releases feel-good hormones like oxytocin in your body while lowering levels of stress hormones like cortisol.

### **7. Donate Something**

Along the lines of doing a good deed, sign up to be an organ donor, [donate blood](#) or, alternatively, donate your time or skills where they're needed most.

### **8. Smile**

Putting on a [fake smile can worsen your mood](#), but thinking positive thoughts and then smiling as a result can make you happier. A genuine smile includes the facial muscles around your eyes, and can actually prompt brain changes linked to increased mood. When you smile at others, they're also more likely to smile back in return, creating an ongoing feedback loop that may lead to more positivity in your life.

### **9. Learn Something New**

Is there a topic you wish you knew more about? Pick something that intrigues you or something you're passionate about — not something you *have* to learn. Spend 15 minutes reading up on your newfound passion.