



Happiness can be thought of as a family of emotions that include joy, contentment, good will, and kindness. Below are some mindfulness practices that can help you increase happy moments during your day

Do Nothing - Dedicate some time every day to being undedicated. Kick your shoes off, stare into space. When we stop trying to constantly solve problems, we often magically find the answers.

Be playful - A serious attitude has it's place, but so does light-heartedness. Studies show that children who do not have enough play interaction can grow into unmotivated adults. Luckily we can fix this by spending some time being playful every day. Try getting down on the floor with a child. If you don't have a child handy, think back to your favorite play activity as a child - recreate these playful moments.

Take a time out from thinking - This is a little different from doing nothing. In this mindfulness exercise thoughts are intentionally put aside. Ten minutes a day is enough to help lower stress levels, by reducing cortisol and increasing feel-good chemicals like GABA. Focus on your breath, and gently bring yourself back to your breath over and over, every time you find that the mind has wandered.

Forgiveness - holding a grudge is stressful, which in turn is bad for your health. Forgiveness does not mean rolling over or being a door-mat. Forgiveness involves letting go of past wrongs. Forgiveness is often not a one-shot deal. Old grudges can pop up seemingly from no where. Conduct a "grudge scan" to see if you are holding on to something that is squashing your happiness. Let it go - just for today.

Self-compassion - Forgive yourself - Now turn the grudge-scan inward. Is there something you keep beating yourself up about? Again, let it go - just for today.

Gratitude - 3 a day - like a vitamin for your mood, taking time to note three small things each day that are going right in your life will cultivate happiness.

Sympathetic joy - is a term used by Buddhists that means taking delight in other's good fortune. Take a look around you. Take in the good fortune of others. If you struggle with jealousy (a real happiness buzz-kill), sympathetic joy can help. Start with focusing on people you feel neutral about and work toward those that elicit stronger emotions.

Notice the absence of pain - both physical and emotional - It is easy to hyper-focus on a tooth-ache or a heart-ache, but we sometimes forget to take note when the pain is gone. Make it a habit of noticing the parts of your body that are in good working order, and any emotional pain that is starting to fade.

For more information on mindfulness for children and families, visit mindfulhub.com

We wish you 20 minutes of mindfulness each day!