

Healthy Living

10 Ways to Jump-Start a Good Mood

Here's a reason to smile: Scientists have found a host of easy tricks that reduce stress and boost bliss — and don't cost much time or money!



Tune In, Chill Out

Feeling stressed? Put on a mellow song. A study published in the British Medical Journal *Heart* found that listening to slow-tempo music like classical or "easy listening" songs reduced heart rate and respiratory rates.

Stop and Smell the Herbs

In a study at Western Oregon University, the smell of lavender relieved feelings of tension after anxiety-provoking tasks. Get your favorite bath soaks or candle in a lavender scented.

Breathe Deeply

Recent research suggests that raising long, deep breathes for just 10 minutes a day can lower blood pressure. By breathing deeply, the body gets the oxygen it needs to function at optimum levels — plus the technique is free, and portable!

Bond With Bowzer

For a quick pick-me-up, find a dog or a cat to pet. Research at the University of Missouri-Columbia found that a few minutes of playing with a four-legged friend raises levels of good-mood-brain-chemicals serotonin and oxytocin.

Schedule a Short Siesta

In research from the National Sleep Foundation, participants who napped for 10 minutes in the afternoon experienced a bigger boost in mood and cognitive function than groups who napped five, 20 or 30 minutes.

Shop Around

For a happy buzz, head to the mall for a shopper's high. Studies show that shopping releases the joy-inducing chemical dopamine in the brain. Even browsing activates the pleasure centers in the brain.

Wear a Rainbow

Next time you want a burst of pep, sup up on something rainbow-colored. Research has shown that "hot" colors like those trigger a chemical reaction in the body that mimics an adrenaline rush.

Hit the Pavement

A recent study published in the *Journal of Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise* found that a 30-minute walk can bring on feelings of well-being. So lace up those walking shoes and get moving!

Get Into the Glow

Sunlight triggers the body to produce vitamin D and for most people just 10 to 20 minutes will do. A lack of vitamin D has been linked to depression in several studies. Remember to rub on sunscreen to counteract any skin damage!

Go Ahead... Chow on Chocolate

There's a reason why biting into a candy bar feels heavenly — one cocoa bean contains substances that can help good chemicals through your body. A few chocolates in your desk drawer may be just the ticket.

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