

The Happiness Manifesto

Below are a list of actions that you can take to improve your happiness. These are taken from the BBC project – 'Making Slough Happy'

1. Get physical

Exercise for half an hour three times a week.

Regular exercise improves your sense of wellbeing and reduces stress

There's significant evidence to show that exercise can improve your mental health, with none of the side effects common to pharmaceutical remedies.

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2. Count your blessings

At the end of each day, reflect on at least five things you're grateful for.

Everyone has things in their life for which they can be grateful

Psychologist Richard Stevens explains: "What you think about influences how you feel. If you spend all the time thinking about problems, as some people do, you're unlikely to feel very happy. Everyone has things in their life for which they can be grateful. Spend more time thinking about these and you'll feel a lot better.

Positive affirmations

Dealing with negative thoughts

3. Talk time

Have an hour-long uninterrupted conversation with your partner or closest friend each week.

Talking to friends is a good chance to share your feelings and experiences, and a chance to catch up on the latest gossip! Expressing your emotions can help you to think more positively about life.

Love and intimacy

Better relationships

4. Plant something

Even if it's a window-box or pot plant. Keep it alive!

Growing plants gives a sense of achievement. You could grow some herbs on your kitchen windowsill.

5. Cut your TV viewing by half

Too much TV is linked to unhappiness

Put an egg timer on your TV and turn it off after a maximum of three hours.

There's good evidence that too much TV is linked to unhappiness, perhaps because it uses up the time we could spend on things that do make us happy: time with our partners, exercise, learning new skills, socialising, even gardening!"

Controlling children's TV viewing is also important.

6. Smile at and/or say hello to a stranger

At least once a day.

Smiling has a real positive effect, not only on making you feel better, but also on other people around you. It's hard for other people not to respond positively to you if you're smiling.

7. Phone a friend

Make contact with at least one friend or relation you've not been in contact with for a while and arrange to meet up.

Having a strong social network makes you feel supported and secure, which, in turn, leads to feeling content.

8. Have a good laugh at least once a day

It's often said that laughter is the best medicine. It's a great stress reliever.

9. Every day make sure you give yourself a treat

And take time to really enjoy it! Be good to yourself and Make more time for you.

10. Daily kindness

Do an good turn for someone each day. Think about volunteering.