

BE WELL

If you have 5 minutes, you can activate your own internal happiness!¹

As a busy professional, I know that it can be overwhelming to hear a new habit or routine that I should incorporate into my day when it already feels too full. But, increasing your happiness does not take hours out of your day and can be completed in just a few minutes. And even though the time invested may be small, these "happiness hacks" pay dividends all day long.

So, take less than 5 minutes and just try one of these 5 happiness hacks, determining for yourself if the reward outweighs the minimal time invested:

1. Tackle Your Hardest Task First Thing in the Day.

Humans can rewire their brains. We have certain "happy chemicals" and we can develop conscious habits that turn those chemicals on. Dopamine, which creates a sense of accomplishment, is stimulated when you start your most difficult task of the day first thing in the morning! If the task is not something you can complete in 5 minutes, break it into smaller chunks. The overall goal is to focus on a specific target, accomplish it and receive the benefits of feeling proud of yourself all day long. For me, it is making sure I exercise or am active first thing in the morning.



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2. Take 10 Deep Breaths.

Researchers have broken down 4 pillars essential to cultivate mental well-being: awareness, connection, insight and purpose. Cultivate awareness through focused breathing. All forms of mindfulness meditations cultivate these aspects of mental well-being, and only take a few minutes each day!

3. Listen to a Happy Song (bonus points if you dance too).

Hearing happy music is on par with mindfulness meditation. Studies have shown it improves overall well-being and mood, lowering feelings of stress. Bonus points for dancing or moving your body along with the music, which can help increase energy levels even further!

4. For a few minutes, focus on the people who you trust to always be there for you.

Oxytocin is not only a cuddle chemical, it is also associated with feelings of trust. To stimulate it, think of people you trust. Ask yourself "If I need support, who will be there?" You can connect with them by sending a quick text or giving them a call. If in person, give them a hug. These simple moments of social connection with someone you love and admire are a big-time happiness booster. Just thinking about who is in your "herd" can be enough. It stimulates the brain's oxytocin and helps you feel safe and secure.

5. Do something kind for someone (or just think kind thoughts).

Daily acts of kindness are a simple way to boost happiness. They can be small, but they must be deliberate. Intentionally set a goal to be kinder to others. You can also spend some time cultivating a sense of kindness toward something in your head.

¹ Reformatted from article, "5 Happiness Hacks that Take 5 Minutes Or Less, by Catherine Pearson (5/12/21), https://www.huffpost.com/entry/happiness-hacks-five-minutes-or-less_l_609bf35fe4b0909247fe3f9f



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