

be strong+well

boost your well-being

Being active can lead to an uptick in happiness.

HAPPINESS TRAINING PUMPS YOU UP

EXERCISE SPARKS AN

instant high, but it's also a surefire path to greater well-being when you do it regularly. So suggests a recent consensus in the *Journal of Happiness Studies*, which asked top experts to rate 68 science-backed strategies for lifting one's happiness level. Being active ranked third (after bonding with family and friends and joining a club), and working out was No. 5. One reason:

"It makes people more aware of how they feel," says study coauthor Ruut Veenhoven, Ph.D., an emeritus professor at Erasmus University Rotterdam in the Netherlands. "That sets the scene for finding a way of life that better fits them." Our latest *Shape Studio* workout video is the quick, feel-good routine that you're sure to stick with. Plus, grab one of our sporty sunglass picks and head outside to maximize the joy factor.

by Mary Anderson





Got 10 minutes? Spend it exercising and you're on your way to greater happiness.

A MINI CIRCUIT TO GIVE YOU A RUSH

WHEN IT COMES TO FINDING the workout with the biggest perks, you can't go wrong. "Both aerobic and anaerobic activity will boost happiness," says Jennifer Huberty, Ph.D., a behavioral scientist and a professor at Arizona State University. "Even 10 minutes a day can help you feel an improvement." (The more, the better, but the benefits max out somewhere after 150 minutes per week, she says.) Kick off your habit with this month's *Shape Studio* workout, a cardio-strength combo created by master motivator Adam Rosante.

A sought-after strength coach and a *Shape Brain Trust* member, Rosante optimizes time—and a joyful takeaway—with timed intervals, like in this routine. "If I tell 20 people to do 10 push-ups, they'll likely finish at different times," he says. "If I tell 20 people to do push-ups for 30 seconds, trying to get as many reps as possible while maintaining perfect form, they'll do different numbers of reps, but they'll finish together and feel like they're part of one team." In his body-weight circuit (no need for equipment!), you'll do

creative compound moves—like a burpee with a surfer's pop-up—core exercises, and more purely aerobic moves "to bring your heart rate up quickly." Follow along with your favorite tunes playing, or Zoom it with a friend to add to the enjoyment, he says. "Working out is one small slice of your life, but it can create the most magical halo across the rest of your life," Rosante says. "Look at exercise for what it is: a very small fraction of your day with nearly endless benefits." Sold? Scan at left for your jump start.



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Even without the weight of a pandemic, everyday strain can leave us with a steady release of stress hormones in our body—which ultimately increase inflammation and lower our immune response. “When we engage in self-care behaviors, we decrease our body’s stress response, or sympathetic nervous system arousal, and activate our rest system, also known as our parasympathetic nervous system,” says Sarah Bren, Ph.D., a clinical psychologist in Pelham, New York. “Our body actually stops production of cortisol and adrenaline, and our heart rate can slow.” What’s more, the most potent self-care moves are easily doable and don’t cost a thing.

BUILD IN BE-PRESENT ACTS

In one Harvard study, participants rated themselves as happiest when they were actually focusing on the activity they were engaged in rather than thinking of something else. (According to the researchers, people’s minds are wandering about half the time.) What made the list of actions that both reliably command one’s attention and increase happiness? Three things bubbled to the top: exercising, listening to music, and making love. We’ll help you get started on the first: Try shape.com/shapestudio for fresh workouts that will engage you. Next, schedule weekly phone calls, or meet up with a good friend for evening walks, says Francyne Zeltser, a clinical psychologist in New York. “That can have a longer-lasting impact than other activities you choose in your spare time,” Zeltser says. Indeed, another study from Harvard found that having close relationships predicts slower mental and physical decline later in life and may help us live longer, happier lives.

GET A MEDITATION HABIT

Researchers at the University of Wisconsin–Madison discovered that mindfulness meditation could actually enhance immune function. Participants in the study were injected with the flu vaccine. Half of them also received mindfulness training, while the others did not. After eight weeks, the mindfulness group showed greater levels of antibodies, effectively giving them better flu-fighting ability. How to channel this Zen? “Part of self-care is holding yourself accountable for doing it,” Zeltser says. “It is often the first thing to go out the window when something else comes up.” Combat this by finding 10 minutes in your day—first thing in the morning, or right after lunch—to fit in a self-care activity like a guided meditation, she says. Try simple meditation apps, like My Life (my.life) or Buddhify (buddhify.com), that walk you through mental breaks of various length. ■

immunity + self-care

The feel-good ripple effect

Daily TLC does your body good that expands way beyond the single act of self-kindness. Use these mini mood lifts to bolster your defense system.

by Jenna Autuori Dedic