



# Tri Fit's Healthy Habits

## February's Goal **Happiness**

Did you know that there is a strong connection between having a positive outlook and better health? Find out how you can foster happiness to improve your life and the lives of those around you!

Share your strategies for happiness on social media using hashtag [#TriFitHappiness](#)



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## Come on, Get Happy!

Wanting to be happier can sound silly, selfish or even greedy. Shouldn't we be grateful for what we have rather than wanting more? Defining happiness can seem as complicated as achieving it. We want to be happy, but how do we get there?

Luckily, research in positive psychology is providing us with more information on the qualities that define happiness in people and communities.

Positive psychology encourages us to focus on finding our strengths and cultivating them to bring higher levels of satisfaction and happiness to our everyday lives. In fact, there is a strong connection between having a positive outlook and better health. Share your happy thoughts on social media **#TriFitHappiness**.

### Happy People:

- Have more energy and less stress, worry, trauma and burnout
- Live an average of 8-12 years longer
- Are regarded as more attractive, intelligent, competent and warm
- Get employed first, promoted first and fired last
- Earn more money and have a greater influence on group decisions
- Are more productive, take less sick days, contribute to the workplace community and are more effective at their jobs.
- Heal faster and get sick less often

Want to learn more about your strengths? Take the Viacharacter Quiz to learn more about yourself  
<http://www.viacharacter.org/www/>



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## Change your Attitude

*“Most folks are as happy as they make up their minds to be” – Abraham Lincoln*

For some people, being happy and positive is natural, but research has shown that about 40% of happiness is in our control. If you're not a “glass half full” person, there are many ways to “fake it ‘til you make it”.

Try incorporating these behaviours for fostering more happiness and changing your attitude.



Behaviour	Benefits	Try This
<b>Practice Mindfulness</b> Take time each day to focus on the present with strategies like meditation	Spending more time in the present and paying attention has been shown to strengthen immunity and is linked to lower anxiety and hostility	Take 5 minutes daily to sit quietly, clear your mind and take deep breaths
<b>Practice Gratitude</b> Count your blessings and be grateful for your circumstances	Promotes optimism, better health and more satisfaction in life	Incorporate the “Three Good Things” exercise daily. Write down what went well and why
<b>Drop Negative Behaviours</b> Forgive and stop judging others and yourself	Helps us feel better and allows us to have more positive emotions and feel closer to others	Write down your negative thoughts and feelings and tear them up
<b>Drop Negative Language</b> Move away from using negative language with yourself and others	Improves our self-esteem and interactions with others	Pay attention to your inner dialogue and conversations. Focus on replacing negative and pessimistic words with positive, grateful and optimistic alternatives

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## De-Clutter your Life!

**“Outer order contributes to inner calm”**

*Gretchen Rubin, author of [The Happiness Project](#)*

Having too much clutter in our lives can cause stress and take away from our happiness.

We spend valuable time looking for things that are lost, trying to decide what to wear and comparing our possessions to what others have.

Clearing clutter can allow for more time and space for the things we really love. It can also help shift our focus to experiences instead of possessions.

Try these strategies to clean up your act:

1. **De-clutter in small chunks.** Work on small areas for 15 minutes at a time. This will allow you to celebrate small victories and not get overwhelmed.
2. **Set aside a few hours.** Once you have momentum from your small victories, focus on larger jobs (rather than one drawer, organize a whole dresser).
3. **Take everything out.** Continue to work on one drawer or shelf at a time. Sort one item at a time and only return items that will be kept.
4. **Be merciless.** Keep only things you've used in the past year that are in working order. If papers are not important – toss them! If you're on the fence, create a 'maybe' box. Toss, donate, give away or sell anything you don't use or need.
5. **Find a clutter-free strategy.** Once clutter is clear, find strategies to stay clutter-free. Consider the one-minute rule; do any job that can be done in one minute or less right away.
6. **Re-evaluate regularly.** Learn to get rid of things you don't use. A good rule of thumb is to get rid of anything you haven't used in a year.



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## Do More of What Makes You Happy

*"A day without laughter is a day wasted" - Charlie Chaplin*

Being an adult is serious business. The average child laughs between 300-500 times each day, while an adult laughs an average of just 15 times. Do adults truly have less fun or do we take ourselves too seriously?

Making happiness a priority helps us to build resilience for when times are tough. Having positive people, interests and memories to draw from can help bring perspective during tough times.



- **Do more of what you love.** In adulthood, we often forget to nurture our interests and hobbies. In fact, many adults focus more on what they *should* do, rather than what they love. Learning and growth bring great satisfaction, so find your passion even if it seems silly!
- **Nourish your relationships.** Social connections are a key to happiness. Research suggests quality is more important than quantity, so nurture your loved ones.
- **Do good and do it often!** Being kind and altruistic lights up the same receptors in the brain as pleasure. Volunteer, perform random acts of kindness and just be nice.
- **Make unpleasant tasks better.** If there are things you can't eliminate, find ways to make them more enjoyable. For example, sing in traffic or learn a new language during your commute.



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## Make Yourself a Priority

***“Happiness is not something readymade.  
It comes from your own actions” - Dalai Lama***

Positive psychology has found that taking care of our minds and bodies is crucial to happiness. Happiness is about quality of life. If we take good care of ourselves, it is easier to feel good each day.

- **Get Moving** – Exercise may be the most effective happiness booster. By increasing self-esteem, reducing anxiety and stress and boosting endorphins (your “feel-good hormones”), exercise can improve any day.
- **Boost Mood with Food** – Eating a healthy, balanced diet rich in tyrosine and omega-3 fatty acids can help build mood boosting potential. Add salmon, tofu, almonds, sunflower seeds and apples to your meal plans.
- **Breathe Deeply** – Taking deep breaths regularly can help clear your mind, oxygenate cells to enhance energy, reduce stress and anxiety and increase levels of serotonin (your “happy hormone”).
- **Laugh Loudly** – The body’s response to laughter is beneficial whether you’re trying to *become* happy or because you *are* happy. Laughing has many benefits, including improved pain tolerance, reduced stress, increased immunity and improved mood.
- **Sleep Well** – Research suggests that an extra hour of sleep would provide more benefit than a \$60,000 raise. It also gives us energy to do more of what we love.

### ***Want to work on your Happiness?***

*Visit the goal setting resources from the January Healthy Habit to work on one or several behaviours listed above. To further boost your happiness quotient, use the February Calendar to record 1 happy thought each day this month. Share your stories on social media using #TriFitHappiness!*

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**Get Some Headspace** Headspace is meditation made simple, a way of treating your head right.

**Instant PepTalk – Happiness** How are you feeling today? Stressed? Depressed? Every day you'll receive a message to massage the spirit.

**The Gratitude Habit** Gratitude + happiness in a game

## Additional Reading & Resources:

The Happiness Advantage, Shawn Achor

The Happiness Project, Gretchen Rubin

Laugh Your Way to Happiness, Lesley Lyle

100 Happy Days: Can you be happy for 100 days in a row? <http://100happydays.com/>

Happify: Build skills for lasting happiness. <http://www.happify.com/>

The Happiness Project Blog: <http://www.gretchenrubin.com/>

## Sources:

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<http://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/the-happiness-project/200911/fundamental-secret-happiness-get-enough-sleep>

<http://inhappiness.org/benefits-of-happiness.htm>

<http://greatergood.berkeley.edu/pdfs/happycircle-ggsc.pdf>

