

### Fight stress with happiness

Most of us are built to handle some stress, however when that stress becomes too great and is constant, it can have lasting physical and mental effects.

When your body begins to feel threatened it responds by sending a flood of hormones to the brain and body; cortisol and adrenaline in particular. Although these hormones are helpful at times, when cortisol levels are chronically elevated the immune, digestive and reproductive systems are suppressed. An increased level of cortisol can result in the following:

- Anxiety and depression
- Weight gain
- Impaired judgement and irritability
- Concentration problems

Happiness, on the other hand, is correlated with an increase in the levels of feel good hormones, dopamine and serotonin resulting in increased productivity, more energy, and better moods.

Increasing our dopamine and serotonin levels can have a great impact by lowering anxiety, stress and cortisol levels. Here are a few simple activities you can do each day to increase your happiness:

1. **Look for laughter:** Take a few minutes to share a funny story, watch funny videos on YouTube or other video sites.  
**Fun fact:** One minute of laughter is equal to using a rowing machine for 10 minutes.
2. **Keep a gratitude journal:** Write down 3 things you are grateful for  
**Fun fact:** Once you start focusing on the things you are grateful for, your brain will begin looking for more things to be grateful for.
3. **Get outside:** Take a breath of fresh air! Get outside for a few minutes.  
**Fun fact:** Light exposure has been shown to increase serotonin levels.
4. **Move more:** Include some form of exercise in your daily routine.  
**Fun fact:** Just 10 minutes of walking immediately influences brain chemistry and increases happiness.



### Tri Fit Cooks

#### A Dark Sweet Treat For Your Brain

A chocolaty Valentine treat can not only make us feel loved, but instantly improve our mood and positive outlook!

Also known as our 'happiness hormone', serotonin is found in chocolate. However, in order to fully benefit from this brain-boost, chocolate must contain at least 75% cocoa. Always look for good quality chocolate when making desserts, or even for nibbling.

Here are some simple buying tips:

- The two main ingredients should be cocoa solids and cocoa butter. Sugar should not be first on the list.
- A bar of chocolate should be wrapped in a dark, well-sealed wrapper for maximum freshness
- A piece should make a snapping sound when broken off the bar, and break without crumbling
- Look for certified organic chocolate since cocoa bean trees tend to be heavily sprayed with pesticides.

Try the Valentine's Day Chocolate Mousse recipe on the next page!

<http://www.realsimple.com/food-recipes/shopping-storing/food/buy-chocolate>

Source: <http://www.plasticitylabs.com/hacking-happiness-at-work/>  
Photo Credit : freedigitalphotos.net

## Happiness, Gratitude and Work!

Expressing gratitude is essential for personal happiness. Research shows that expressing gratitude each day can help us cope with stress, strengthen our immune systems, and improve our interpersonal relationships. The brain can actually be trained to seek the positive in life situations thereby energizing, inspiring and enriching our lives.

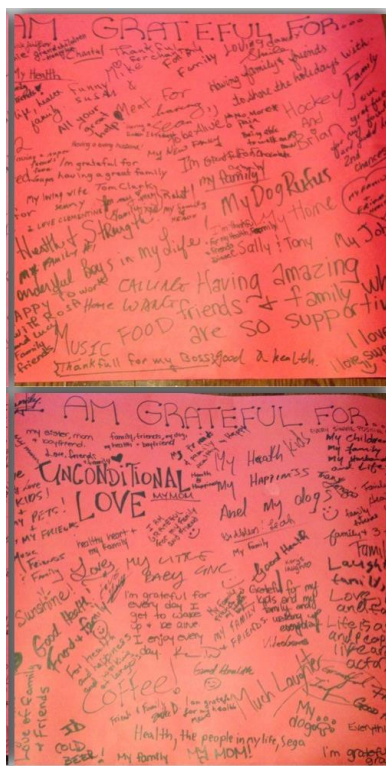
With this in mind, Longo's Tri Fit Wellness Consultants, Anna and Chantal, created a poster board "Gratitude Wall" and encouraged Longo's employees to write down things they were grateful for, no matter how small the event. Employees embraced the idea of sharing what they were grateful for and throughout the month of December, Anna and Chantal gathered these gratitude messages at the various Longo's locations.

At the end of the month the messages were displayed and the results were amazing. Employees smiled and visibly brightened upon reading messages on the Gratitude Wall. The energy-boosting power of positive thought is alive and well at Longo's!

### Want to get people thinking about gratitude at your workplace?

This project can very easily be duplicated at your workplace by simply purchasing poster board and colourful markers. Display the board labeled "Gratitude Wall" in a common area, ask employees to write down what they are grateful for and see the positive workplace results!

Share what you are grateful for on social media using hashtag #TriFitHappiness



Longo's employees express gratitude

## Upcoming Events

### FEBRUARY IS HEART HEALTH MONTH

Did you know heart disease or stroke takes one life every 7 minutes and 90% of Canadians have at least 1 risk factor for heart disease?

Heart Month began in 1958 with the goal of raising funds for heart research in Ontario. Today it is a national campaign reaching millions of Canadians.

Find out more about Heart Month at <http://heartmonth.heartandstroke.ca>

### WINNING AT LOSING

Our annual weight loss challenge is in full swing! With the new year upon us comes a new you! Winning at Losing began in January, however registration can take place at any time throughout the challenge. The 10 week program gives you the tools to challenge yourself to lose weight and improve your fitness and develop lifelong healthy habits. Contact your Tri Fit Consultant for details.

### RECIPE OF THE MONTH

#### Valentine's Day Chocolate Mousse

4oz (75% cacao) dark chocolate, chopped  
3oz water  
Pinch of sea salt  
1-2 trays of ice cubes

Place a medium mixing bowl in the freezer for 1 hour before prep. Melt chocolate in a pan over med-low heat with water and a pinch of salt. Stir with a whisk until chocolate syrup consistency. Turn off the heat. Dump ice cubes into a large bowl with 1 cup of cold water. Place the frozen mixing bowl inside the large bowl and scrape the hot chocolate sauce into the top bowl. Whisk for 3-4 minutes until it is a fluffy mousse-like consistency. If your mousse cools and thickens too quickly, you can re-melt it and start over. Spoon the mousse into serving dishes then sprinkle the top of the dessert with a pinch of coarse sea salt. Refrigerate until ready to serve. Serves 4.

<http://theclothesmakethegirl.com/2012/02/12/valentines-day-mousse-more/>