

Don't feel bad about feeling good



Many of us have been conditioned to believe that happiness is something that we must earn, or that we must follow certain rules or standards to achieve. We may feel pressured by social media, advertisements, or our peers to conform to a certain image of happiness, such as having a perfect body, a successful career, a loving family, or a busy social life. We may also feel guilty about being happy when we see others who are suffering or struggling, and we may think that we don't deserve to

be happy when there is so much injustice and inequality in the world.

However, feeling guilty about being happy is not only unhealthy, but also counterproductive. Guilt can lower our self-esteem, increase our stress levels, and make us less likely to enjoy the present moment. Guilt can also prevent us from sharing our happiness with others, or from being compassionate and supportive to those who need it. It can rob us of the joy and gratitude that we should feel for the simple things in life, such

as a sunny day, a good meal, a laugh with a friend, or a hug from a loved one.

The first step to being happy without guilt is to realize that happiness is not a competition, a reward, or a privilege. Happiness is a natural and universal human right, and we all deserve to be happy, regardless of our circumstances, choices, or achievements. Happiness is also not a fixed or static state, but a dynamic and fluctuating process, that depends on many factors, both internal and external. Happiness is not something that we can chase or attain, but something that we can cultivate and practice, by paying attention to our thoughts, feelings, and actions, and by aligning them with our values and goals.

The second step is to accept ourselves as we are, and to respect our own needs and preferences. We don't have to follow a certain lifestyle, diet, or routine to be happy if we are taking care of our physical, mental, and emotional well-being.

We don't need to compare ourselves to others, or set unrealistic standards of happiness, as long as we are satisfied and content with what we have and who we are, and we don't have to apologize or justify our happiness if we are not harming or hurting anyone else.

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Yoga can help transform mental health

Yoga is a practice that can benefit mental health in various ways, such as reducing stress and anxiety, improving mood and well-being, and promoting relaxation and balance.

There are many different styles of yoga, each with its own benefits. Beginners can start with gentle forms like Hatha or Restorative yoga, while more advanced practitioners can try more dynamic and challenging forms like Vinyasa, Ashtanga, or Bikram yoga.

Joining an organized class can help beginners to learn the basics of yoga, get feedback and guidance from instructors, and meet new people. However, classes can also be expensive, inconvenient, or unsuitable for some people. Online classes and tutorials are another option that can offer more flexibility and affordability.

The only essential equipment for yoga is a good quality mat, which provides comfort and stability. Other optional equipment includes blocks, straps, and bolsters, which can help with modifying poses and enhancing the practice. Basic clothing like leggings, shorts, t-shirts, or tank tops made from breathable, stretchy materials are the best.

Yoga can improve physical health by building strength, flexibility, and endurance. It can also improve mental health by developing greater clarity and focus, reducing stress and anxiety, and increasing happiness and fulfilment. Yoga can benefit the overall quality of life by promoting a sense of inner peace and calm.

Ways to keep your heart healthy

Keeping your heart healthy and strong is important for maintaining your overall well-being, especially as you get older.

Here are some ways to take care of your heart and prevent cardiovascular diseases:

- Eat a balanced diet that is low in saturated fat, salt, and sugar, and high in fibre, fruits, and vegetables. Choose lean sources of protein, such as fish, poultry, or legumes, and limit your intake of red meat and processed foods. Include healthy fats, such as nuts, seeds, avocados, and olive oil, which can lower your cholesterol and blood pressure levels.
- Stay physically active and aim for at least 150 minutes of moderate-intensity aerobic exercise per week, such as brisk walking, cycling, or swimming. You can also add some strength training and flexibility exercises to your routine, such as yoga, pilates, or resistance bands. Physical activity can help you maintain a healthy weight, improve your circulation, and strengthen your heart muscles.
- Quit smoking and avoid exposure to secondhand smoke, which can damage your arteries and increase your risk of heart attack and stroke. Smoking can also reduce the amount of oxygen that reaches your heart and other organs, making them work harder. If you need help to quit smoking, talk to your health care provider or call the Canadian Cancer Society's Smokers' Helpline at 1-877-513-5333.
- Check your blood pressure and cholesterol levels regularly and follow your doctor's advice on how to keep them within a healthy range. High blood pressure and cholesterol can cause plaque buildup in your arteries, which can narrow them and reduce blood flow to your heart. This can lead to angina, heart attack, or stroke. You may need to take medication or make lifestyle changes to lower your blood pressure and cholesterol, depending on your risk factors and medical history.

By following these tips, you can protect your heart and enjoy a longer and happier life. Remember that it is never too late to start taking care of your heart, and every small change can make a big difference. For more information and resources on heart health, visit the Heart and Stroke Foundation of Canada website at www.heartandstroke.ca.



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Walk with mindfulness

Taking a walk outside can have many positive effects on your physical and mental well-being. Whether you live in a busy city or a quiet countryside, there are always opportunities to explore your surroundings and connect with nature.

Walking is a simple and low-impact exercise that can improve your cardiovascular health, lower your blood pressure, and reduce your risk of chronic diseases. Walking outside exposes you to natural light, which can boost your mood, regulate your circadian rhythm, and help you sleep better at night. It can also stimulate your senses and enhance your creativity. You can notice the colours, sounds, smells, and textures of your environment, and discover new perspectives and insights.

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present moment, without judgment or distraction. It can help you enjoy your walk more fully, and reap the benefits of being in nature.

Here are a few tips to include mindfulness in your walk:

- Before you start, take a few deep breaths and set an intention for your journey. You can choose to focus on a specific aspect of your experience, such as your breath, your body, or your surroundings.
- As you walk, try to be aware of what is happening in the here and now. Notice the sensations in your feet, legs, and arms, as well as the movement of your breath. Observe the sights, sounds, smells, and

feelings that arise in your environment. If you encounter any thoughts or emotions, acknowledge them without judging or reacting to them, and gently bring your attention back to the present.

- At the end of your walk, take a moment to appreciate your experience. You can express gratitude for yourself, for nature, or for anything else that comes to mind. You can also reflect on what you learned or enjoyed during your walk, and how you can apply it to your daily life.

There is no definitive answer to how long you should walk outside, as it depends on your personal preferences, goals, and circumstances. The Canadian Physical Activity Guidelines recommend that adults aged 18 to 64 should accumulate at least 150 minutes of moderate to vigorous physical activity per week, in bouts of 10 minutes or more. This means that you can aim for at least 30 minutes of walking outside, five days a week, or adjust your schedule according to your needs and availability.

You can also vary the intensity, duration, and frequency of your walks, depending on your level of fitness, motivation, and interest. You can start with shorter and easier walks, and gradually increase the challenge as you feel more comfortable and confident. You can also mix up your routes, locations, and companions, to keep your walks fun and engaging.

Obesophobia explained

Today there is a lot of pressure to conform to unrealistic and unhealthy standards of beauty. People who are underweight or overweight are often judged, discriminated against, or stigmatized for their appearance. Such displays of body shaming can come from strangers, friends, family, or even oneself. It can happen in person, online, or in the media and can be intentional or unintentional, but it always hurts.

Body shaming can make people feel ashamed, insecure, or unworthy of respect and love. It can also lead to serious mental and physical consequences. One of these consequences is obesophobia, which is also known as pocrescophobia. Could you have this anxiety disorder?

Obesophobia causes a person to have an extreme fear of gaining weight. It may be caused by social pressure, body image issues, or past trauma. For example, someone who was abused or bullied because of their weight may develop obesophobia.

This disorder can cause physical and psychological symptoms, such as trembling, palpitations, struggling to breathe, poor appetite, malnutrition, lack of energy, feeling overweight, excessive exercising, and insomnia.

Obesophobia can affect a person's social life and relationships. They may isolate themselves from others, avoid situations that involve food, or feel judged or criticized by others. They may also have low self-esteem and confidence.

Do you feel someone you know might have obesophobia? Help is always available for people with anxiety disorders and those who care for them. The internet will guide you to the relevant services in your country of residence. Find those services. Use them to help the person suffering and get support for yourself to make helping them easier.

If you think you may be a victim of this disorder, speak with a health care professional to find out more information.



How can we spread our joy without annoying others?

Social anxiety does not have to be scary

Social anxiety can cause isolation, low self-confidence, and mental health issues, but social interaction can reduce anxiety and improve cognitive abilities. Social anxiety disorder affects around 12% of adults at some point in their lives.

However, social anxiety can be seen as an opportunity for self-discovery, vulnerability, resilience, and authenticity, rather than a barrier. By facing fears head-on, you can build courage and self-assurance. By accepting your true self, you can cultivate deeper self-awareness and growth.

If you're working to overcome the challenges of social anxiety, keep the following key techniques and mindset approaches in mind:

Embrace a new outlook:

The first step is changing how you think about social anxiety. Rather than viewing it as a hindrance, think of it as a chance to learn more about yourself and develop inner strength. Changing your mindset allows you to access powerful lessons in vulnerability, resilience, and making genuine connections with others.

Interrupt negative self-talk:

Is that harsh inner voice fuelling anxious, negative thoughts? You can interrupt that cycle. Notice when you're putting yourself down with harsh judgments, and consciously replace those thoughts with affirmations about your worth and strength.

Take it step by step:

Instead of trying to overcome all your barriers immediately, start small. Set achievable goals that gradually expose

you to anxiety-inducing situations. It could be as simple as making eye contact and smiling at a passerby.

Be your own best friend:

Treat yourself with the same kindness you'd offer your closest friend. Self-forgiveness and patience are key. If you stumble or have an awkward interaction, don't beat yourself up. Remind yourself that personal growth has ups and downs. Be gentle with yourself, and keep moving forward.

Build a support system:

You don't have to go through this alone. Surround yourself with loved ones who encourage you on this journey and help keep you motivated. Open up to them about the challenges you're facing, and let them be your cheerleaders for any progress, no matter how small. Having a supportive circle in your corner can make a huge difference.

Embrace imperfection:

Feeling awkward, nervous, and having social missteps happens to everyone from time to time. An imperfect moment doesn't define you, so don't be too hard on yourself when things don't go smoothly. The more you can accept your imperfections, the more confidence you'll gain in social settings.

Overcoming social anxiety can lead to more confidence, fulfillment, and richer personal connections. By embracing one's true self, one can attract more positive and genuine relationships. By overcoming the challenges of social anxiety, one can unlock a new world of possibilities.

Being a happy person is a blessing and a gift. Happiness is not something that we can take for granted, but something that we should cultivate and cherish. Happiness is not only beneficial for ourselves, but also for others, as it can spread positive energy and uplift the mood of those around us. However, being a happy person does not mean that we are oblivious or insensitive to the realities and difficulties of life. We understand that not everyone is happy, and that happiness is not always easy to achieve or maintain. We respect and value the feelings and opinions of others, and we do not want to impose our happiness on them or make them feel uncomfortable or inferior. Therefore, we are always mindful and careful of how we express and share our happiness with others, and we try to do so in a way that is respectful, empathetic, and generous.

One of the best ways to spread our joy without annoying others is to be authentic and genuine. We don't have to pretend or exaggerate our happiness, or to boast or brag about it, as this can make others feel insecure, jealous, or resentful. We don't have to impose or force our happiness on others, or to expect or demand them to be happy, as this can make others feel pressured, stressed, or obligated. We don't have to ignore or dismiss the problems or challenges that others may face, or to offer unsolicited or unrealistic advice, as this can make others feel misunderstood, invalidated, or patronized.

Instead, we can spread our joy by being humble and modest, by acknowledging and appreciating the contributions and achievements of others, and by celebrating and supporting their happiness. We can spread our joy by being empathetic and compassionate, by listening and understanding the feelings and perspectives of others, and by offering and providing help and comfort when needed. We can spread our joy by being generous and kind, by giving and sharing our time, energy, and resources with others, and by expressing and showing our gratitude and appreciation for them. We can spread our joy by being positive and optimistic, by focusing and highlighting the good and the beautiful in ourselves, others, and the world, and by inspiring and encouraging others to do the same.



Symptoms and causes of chronic constipation

It may not be something you want to discuss with anyone other than your doctor, and even then, talking about a condition like chronic constipation can be a great source of embarrassment. While suffering from occasional constipation is a common condition, chronic constipation is more severe and can really impede your life. The sooner you get it successfully diagnosed and treated, the better.

Chronic constipation is a condition where a person has infrequent or difficult bowel movements for weeks. It is different from occasional constipation, which is a common and mild problem. Chronic constipation can cause pain, discomfort, and other complications.

Some of the symptoms and signs of chronic constipation include having fewer than three bowel movements a week, having hard or lumpy stools, feeling a blockage in the rectum, and needing help to remove stools from the rectum. Other signs are straining to complete bowel movements, feeling that the stools are not fully evacuated, and using manual methods to facilitate the bowel movements.

Chronic constipation can be caused by various factors, such as blockages in the colon or rectum, nerve problems that affect the bowel movements, difficulties with the pelvic muscles, and hormonal imbalances. Some of the risk factors that can increase the chance of developing chronic constipation include mental health conditions, certain medications, a low-fibre diet, dehydration, being female, and getting older.

Mental health conditions such as depression and eating disorders can affect the bowel habits and the appetite.

Certain medications such as blood pressure drugs, antidepressants, opioids, and sedatives can slow down the bowel movements or cause dry stools. A low-fibre diet can make the stools harder and more difficult to pass. Dehydration can also reduce the fluid content of the stools. Being female can increase the risk of chronic constipation due to hormonal changes or pregnancy. Being older can affect the muscle strength and the bowel motility.

The first step to treating chronic constipation is correctly diagnosing it. Talk to your health care professional if you think you may be suffering from this condition.

If you have occasional constipation, you may be able to relieve it by making some simple changes to your lifestyle and diet. Here are some tips on what to do:

- Drink more water. Keeping yourself hydrated can help soften your stools and make them easier to pass. Aim for at least 8 glasses of water a day, or more if you exercise or sweat a lot.
- Eat more fibre. Fibre can add bulk and moisture to your stools and stimulate your bowel movements. Good sources of fibre include fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes. Gradually increase your fibre intake to avoid gas and bloating.
- Don't ignore the urge. When you feel the need to go to the bathroom, don't delay or hold it in. This can weaken your pelvic muscles and make your stools harder and drier. Try to establish a regular routine and go to the bathroom at the same time every day, preferably after a meal or a warm drink.

The importance of fibre in your diet

Fibre is a type of carbohydrate that your body cannot digest or absorb. It passes through your digestive tract and helps to keep it healthy and functioning properly. There are two types of fibre: soluble and insoluble. Soluble fibre dissolves in water and forms a gel-like substance that lowers your cholesterol and blood sugar levels.

Insoluble fibre adds bulk and roughage to your stools and prevents constipation. Both types of fibre have many benefits for your health, such as:

- Reducing your risk of heart disease, stroke, diabetes, and some cancers. Fibre can lower your blood pressure, cholesterol, and inflammation, which are risk factors for these chronic diseases. Fibre can also improve your blood sugar control and insulin sensitivity, which can prevent or manage diabetes.
- Supporting your weight management. Fibre can make you feel full longer and reduce your appetite, which can help you eat less and control your weight. Fibre can also boost your metabolism and burn more calories, which can aid in weight loss.
- Promoting your gut health. Fibre can feed the beneficial bacteria in your gut, which can improve your digestion and immunity. Fibre can also prevent or treat various digestive disorders, such as irritable bowel syndrome, diverticular disease, hemorrhoids, and colon cancer.

According to Health Canada, the recommended daily intake of fibre for adults is 25 grams for women and 38 grams for men. However, most Canadians only get about half of that amount. To increase your fibre intake, you can:

- Choose high-fibre foods. Some examples of high-fibre foods are fruits, vegetables, whole grains, nuts, seeds, and legumes. Aim for at least five servings of fruits and vegetables a day, and choose whole grains over refined grains. You can also add nuts, seeds, and legumes to your salads, soups, and snacks.
- Read food labels. Look for foods that have at least four grams of fibre per serving, and avoid foods that have added sugars, fats, or salt. You can also compare different brands and choose the ones that have more fibre and less calories.
- Supplement your diet. If you have trouble getting enough fibre from food, you can take a fibre supplement, such as psyllium, oat bran, or methylcellulose. However, you should consult your doctor before taking any supplements, especially if you have any medical conditions or allergies. You should also drink plenty of water when taking fibre supplements to avoid dehydration and intestinal blockage.

Ways to beat procrastination



Beating procrastination can be a challenge, but here are some effective strategies to help you get started:

1. Develop a schedule: Plan your tasks and set specific times for their completion. This helps create a routine and a sense of accountability.

2. Break up large projects:

Divide bigger tasks into smaller, manageable parts. This makes them less daunting and easier to tackle.

3. Improve time management skills:

Use tools and techniques like the Pomodoro Technique or time-blocking to make better use of your time.

4. Change your perspective: Shift your focus from the negative aspects of a task to the positive outcomes of completing it.

5. Commit to the task: Make a firm decision to complete a task, and remind yourself of the consequences of not doing it.

6. Work in productive environments: Choose a workspace that minimizes distractions and maximizes focus.

energyzone

Here are two great superfoods that pack a nutritional punch:



1. Blackcurrants:

Often overshadowed by other berries, blackcurrants are rich in antioxidants and can support healthy cellular aging and blood sugar levels. They're a great alternative to processed snacks and can help avoid unhealthy sugar spikes.

Superfoods!



2. Maca Root:

Originating from Peru, maca root is known for supporting healthy hormone balance and energy levels. It's a versatile food that can be added to smoothies or baked goods for an extra boost of nutrition.

These superfoods are not only beneficial for health but also add variety to your diet. Try incorporating them into your regular meals.

Let bees be

Bees are more than just the producers of honey; they are vital to the balance of our ecosystems and the success of our agricultural systems. In Canada, bees play a crucial role in pollinating a wide array of crops, from apples and pears to cucumbers and melons. Their tireless work supports not only the diversity of our diets but also the health of our environment.



As pollinators, bees contribute significantly to the productivity of our farms and gardens. It's estimated that one-third of the food we consume each day relies on pollination mainly by bees. Without them, many of our favourite fruits and vegetables would become scarce and expensive.

Bees also support the growth of trees, flowers, and other plants, which serve as food and shelter for wildlife. This biodiversity is crucial for a resilient and robust ecosystem, capable of withstanding changes and challenges.

The economic value of bees is undeniable. In British Columbia alone, bees contribute an estimated \$538 million to the province's economy through crop pollination. Across Canada, this figure soars to over \$3.2 billion, highlighting the immense impact these small creatures have on our national prosperity.

So, what can we do to protect these essential pollinators? Supporting local beekeepers, planting bee-friendly gardens, and advocating for policies that protect bee habitats are just a few ways we can help. By letting bees be, we ensure the sustainability of our food sources and the health of our planet for future generations.

Let's appreciate and protect our buzzing companions, for they hold the key to our ecological and economic well-being.