

COMPLETELY WELL

September 2019 FEATURED IN THIS ISSUE

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Climbing the *Happiness* Ladder

Have you ever thought to yourself, “When I get ____ I will be happy”? Your life’s happiness hinging on if and when you acquire the perfect life partner, children, house, car, job promotion, or beach vacation. Many of us count the days until we reach our next milestone but, after the dust settles, we still find ourselves wanting more. It’s as if you’re climbing up a ladder and each time you take a step up a few more rungs are added to the top. Are you climbing the happiness ladder? How can you take time to love your life today?

Here are a few ways to cultivate happiness in the here and now.

- **Practice Gratitude** - Being grateful for what you have (a simple cup of coffee or some sunshine) can snowball into larger appreciation and enduring contentment and makes it easier to *choose* joy. Even during difficult times, finding small things to be grateful for can help you manage the challenges that life brings.
- **Stay Connected** - Spending quality time with people we love and who love us helps increase resilience to stress and builds our sense of worthiness and belonging. Social media, on the other hand, is associated with increased anxiety and depression. Spend less time online and more time with friends and family.
- **Go Outdoors** - Spending time outdoors helps you disconnect from technology and quiet your mind. Studies show being in nature decreases anxiety, depression, and mental fatigue.
- **Read a Book** - Put down the electronics and pick up a book. Reading a book reduces the stress hormone cortisol and can improve symptoms related to depression and other mood disorders.
- **Volunteer** - Spend time serving others or supporting causes that matter to you. Helping others can improve your self-esteem and bring about a sense of purpose and fulfillment.
- **Get a Pet** - Adding a pet to your life can lower stress and increase contentment. Caring for your pet builds a sense of self-worth, and the unconditional love that you receive from your pet is pure joy!
- **Get More Sleep** - Sleep is a time for physical healing and mental renewal. Getting enough sleep lowers your stress hormone levels and provides you with resources to handle the ups and downs of a day.

Happiness is really a reflection of the good relationship we have with ourselves and the world. It is not possible to buy it or get it from someone else. Actively taking care of yourself and others, all with a sense of gratitude and mindfulness, will invite more happiness into your life.



Your Personal Medical Record

Do you know when you last received a tetanus shot? Or when you were last screened for anemia? Do you know what medicine you received for that upper respiratory infection you had a couple of years ago? Having access to your medical records makes answering these questions possible. Perhaps more importantly, having access to your medical records allows you the opportunity to know each test result, diagnosis, and treatment so you can share this information with other medical professionals that you may wish to see. The HIPAA Privacy Rule gives individuals the right to access and receive a copy of their medical records.

According to the HIPAA Privacy Rule, you have the following rights regarding your medical records:

- You may request a copy of your records, even if you have an outstanding balance for services.
- A health care provider or health plan may charge you for copying and mailing your records, but those charges must be “reasonable costs,” according to HIPAA.
- You may request that any errors in either medical or billing records be changed and your records amended. If the error is verified, it must be corrected.

These basic rights are guaranteed, though individual states, health care groups, and hospitals may have additional policies. For more information on your rights, go to HHS.gov and search for *HIPAA for Individuals*.

Tech Tip: Many healthcare providers have moved to electronic medical records with a patient portal. This allows you to access your records any time, contact your care team, schedule appointments, request prescription refills and more.

Produce of the Month Apples

It's apple season! Grocery stores will soon be full of over 100 varieties grown commercially in the U.S. and your local orchards will be open to the public for apple picking. Apples are a super fruit, one liked by many! They are an excellent source of satiating and cholesterol-lowering fiber. They benefit heart and lung health and are associated with reduced cancer risk.

The Basics: Any apple - red, green or yellow - will provide you with health benefits, so choose the taste and texture you love. Taste can vary from sweet to tart, and some apples retain their texture better in baking than others. Red Delicious may be the most common and is good for snacking. Granny Smith is a favorite for baking. Gala, Braeburn, Jonathan, Golden Delicious and Honeycrisp are all excellent apple varieties, too. Whichever type of apple you choose, look for good color and a lack of blemishes. Store in the refrigerator and be sure to wash apples with vinegar water and a produce brush prior to eating. If you are slicing an apple for a recipe and want to prevent browning, place the sliced apples into a bowl of cold water with a tablespoon of lemon juice. For a healthy snack, try it paired with peanut butter or cheese for extra protein.

Try This: Add chopped apple to your favorite stuffing recipe, or create a healthy after school treat by placing thinly sliced apples on a whole grain bagel with cream cheese or peanut butter. Thinly sliced apples are a surprising but delicious addition to a turkey or ham sandwich!

The Facts: The average medium size apple has 82 calories, is high in fiber and is a good source of vitamin C. Compared to the average fruit, apples are exposed to a higher level of pesticides. Since this is a fruit we eat with the peel on, consider buying organic.



Healthy Soups

Fall is approaching and, when the temperature drops, there is nothing like a warm bowl of delicious soup. Read on to discover ways to choose healthy versions of your favorite soups -

- Vegetable soups will contain the most vitamins and fiber. Virtually all vegetables can be added to soup, including squash, beets, carrots, parsnips, turnips, kale, cabbage, zucchini, broccoli, mushrooms, celery, even frozen peas, green beans, and corn.
- Instead of chicken or beef, choose a soup that features beans or lentils. These are a great source of fiber, iron, and plant-based protein.
- Broth and tomato-based soups are great options that are often lower in fat and calories. Want to make your own broth? Save the leftovers whenever you buy a rotisserie chicken. The bones make excellent stock, especially if roasted first.
- If cream soups are your favorite, adding pureed vegetables like potato, sweet potato, cauliflower, spinach, or red pepper to your base can add creaminess and flavor.
- In addition to onions and garlic, fresh or dried herbs can add a lot of flavor and nutrients without having to use a lot of salt. Try parsley in your chicken soup, cilantro in your chili, or chives in your potato soup.
- Get out your blender. Pureed soups offer an easy and delicious way to enjoy your vegetables. Butternut squash, carrot and ginger, or classic tomato.
- Preparing homemade soup allows you to add in lots of vegetables and control the amount of added salt. Freeze a few batches to have on hand for an easy weeknight meal.
- When ordering soup at a restaurant or stocking up at the store, read the nutrition information and choose reduced sodium soups whenever possible.

Make soup a part of your weekly menu as one way to increase your vegetable intake. Try using a crockpot to make it an easy family dinner, giving you more time to enjoy the warm comfort of soup knowing you are doing something good for your health!

Science discovered what Mom knew all along!

Chicken soup can make you feel better when you have a cold or the flu. A study conducted at the University of Nebraska Medical Center found that chicken soup contains anti-inflammatory properties that reduce cold symptoms like congestion and coughs caused by inflammation.

The Power of Music

Regular exercise is good for you. Combined with music, it's even better.

Physically

Music can improve your endurance. Those who exercise to music tend to exercise for longer amounts of time. In fact, a study in 2006 found that runners who listened to upbeat music increased their distance and speed.

Music helps your body work more efficiently. Research done in 2012 discovered a coordination between the beat of music and the individual. Keeping the exerciser in regular rhythm, music helped cyclists use 7% less oxygen than those who cycled in silence.

Music can intensify your workout. People who exercise to music will regularly increase their intensity to match the beats per minute of the song. In fact, many people create playlists that include music to warm up, increase intensity, and then cool down!

The next time you head out for a walk or run, bring along your favorite tunes. Experiment with different artists and genres until you find the perfect music for your exercise routine!

Psychologically

Music is a known mood enhancer.

Listening to upbeat music can make any task easier!

Music can delay the feeling of fatigue.

Caught up in the right rhythm, we forget to tire and instead rock, and exercise, on.

Music cultivates inspiration and motivation. Design your own workout playlist that pumps up your determination along with the volume!

Love to get lost in a good song?

So do we... just remember to be safe. While exercising, stay aware of your surroundings to prevent accident or injury.

Try These Artist Top Picks for Your Workout Playlist

- | | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1. Queen | 9. Bruno Mars |
| 2. Beyoncé | 10. Macklemore |
| 3. Michael Jackson | 11. Bon Jovi |
| 4. Imagine Dragons | 12. Rihanna |
| 5. Daft Punk | 13. Sia |
| 6. AC/DC | 14. Janis Joplin |
| 7. Florida Georgia Line | 15. Red Hot Chili Peppers |
| 8. Kendrick Lamar | 16. Carrie Underwood |





Q:

Hey Erin. I just started reading your Ask the Trainer articles through my work and wanted to reach out because I am completely new to fitness. I have no idea where to start. For someone like me who has never been an athlete and never worked out, how would you recommend I get started?

Chloe P.

A:

Hi Chloe. Thank you so much for reading my articles, I hope you have enjoyed them. I'd love to help you get started on your fitness journey. When getting ready to start something new in the fitness world I always recommend talking to your doctor, even if you are in good health. Completing your physical exam with your family physician gives you a starting point (plus we should all be getting one once a year). Okay, now onto the good stuff.

Where to start?

Find an activity you enjoy. If you aren't enjoying the workout you aren't as likely to stick with it. Then find your workout style. Do you think you would prefer to workout by yourself or with the company of others? Do you want to do your own thing or do you think you would do better with the structure that a group class offers? Or maybe working with a trainer can give you the confidence or direction you need to reach your goals?

Workout Solo

If you think you may like doing cardio and a little strength training on your own maybe joining a Planet Fitness would be right for you. They have workout checklists to guide you through a workout and each machine offers instructions for safe use. If a gym setting isn't your thing, get your cardio by walking or biking outdoors then keep a set of free weights at home to get a quick workout before or after work. Checkout the exercise videos on your portal for help with resistance training, yoga, and more. Setting attainable goals for yourself each week and tracking your workouts on the portal can help you monitor your progress.

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Workout with a Group

If trying a group fitness class sounds fun, join your local YMCA or find a small group training studio. If you like a little bit of everything (like me!) many gyms and fitness studios give you the chance to mix it up and keep things interesting. Does yoga or Pilates sound more your style? Look for a local yoga studio to take some classes or find a friend to join you.

Workout with a Trainer

If the group setting isn't your thing or you still have no idea where to start, find a certified personal trainer in your area. Start by asking a fellow co-worker, family member or friend if they can refer you to a trainer they have had success with. Many fitness centers have trainers you can work with for free or for additional cost. You can Google personal trainers in your area but make sure to look at the reviews, look at their background and experience along with who they are certified through.



It may take some time to find out what you enjoy, but don't give up after one or two workouts. Try to commit to your chosen activity for a couple months (so you can gain momentum and start seeing results) before you switch to something new. Be patient with yourself. When you find your workout style, it will all be worth it. Good luck!

Dedicated to your success,

Erin M Long, B.S., NSCA-CPT

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