

# Wellness

## Secrets to happiness.

with Rachel Grunwell

It's common to think we will be happier once we have X amount of money, get married, pay off the mortgage, or take that idyllic holiday. But waiting to be happy is such a waste of precious time. We all have the ability to adjust our mindsets so that we can feel happier right now.

Many of us assume that some people are simply naturally wired to be happier. But some of it comes down to attitude and there are a lot of research-backed 'tools' available to boost our personal happiness levels. They're worth a try.

In a popular TED talk Shawn Achor, a leading expert on research around happiness and author of *The Happiness Advantage*, recommends "raising your positivity in the present". What he means is, the idea that reaching success makes us happy is a 'broken' idea. We need to instead learn to be happy right now because, in fact, happiness can lead us to being more successful.

He recommends writing down three new things that you are grateful for every day, to boost your happiness. This can help you to scan the world for positives and train your brain to see more uplifting things, he explains.

Meditation helps us to be still and focus. Achor also explains that performing regular acts of kindness creates "ripples of positivity". It can be as simple as sending a kind and genuine email to someone.

For me, the things that boost my wellbeing include smiling at strangers (I love seeing the warmth of their smiles in return); making exercise a regular habit (to shake stress and rejuvenate); eating lots of 'real' and unprocessed food; showing others kindness as well as volunteering for the Achilles charity (because it's about strengthening a community and giving back); and I've also learned not to say yes to everything (because this can spread me too thin).

Mindfulness and yoga are two other powerful tools that uplift my

soul. I recently attended Wanderlust Great Lake Taupo – a festival for the mind, body and soul that showcased yoga, healthy living, music and inspirational speakers. A constant theme throughout this event was how to tap into more happiness. From the yoga teachers to the speakers, the musicians and the workshops, festivalgoers were encouraged to nurture positive connections with others, show kindness, express more gratitude, appreciate 'the now' and tap into the art of slowing down to be more in the present.

Many thought leaders inspired me, including Elena Brower – yoga teacher, speaker and the author of yoga workbook, *Art of Attention*. I loved her outlook so much I asked her for five inspired tips on being happier. Here they are:



**Get plenty of rest and sleep (seven hours)** "Remember that naps are never an indulgence; they are invitations to your immune system."

**Meditate** "Even five minutes a day will help you cultivate and sustain the attitudes of your choosing."

**Surround yourself with people who inspire and uplift you** "Stay close and attentive to the nourishment they provide, and return the favour."

**Move your body regularly** "Even 15 minutes a few times a week will boost your mood, elevate your interactions and keep your circulation strong."

**Empower others** "Sharing encouragement, helping others as you rise up and giving others your time will bring you joy and clarity."

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