

Here are ten tips on how to live a happier life:

By: Dr. Kathleen Hall

1. **Attitude of Gratitude:** It is physiologically impossible to be grateful and experience stress at the same time. Research shows grateful individuals report having more energy and less physical complaints than their nongrateful counterparts. Studies tell us daily gratitude exercises resulted in higher levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, optimism, and happiness.
2. **Choice:** Every moment of our lives is a choice, and every choice we make has a huge ripple effect. If we choose to commit to practicing happiness and optimism, we can transform our lives.
3. **Being Proactive:** Stop being the victim of our lives and constantly responding to other people and their lives. If we create a plan with our passion and live in a proactive manner, we will become the heroes of our lives, not the victims.
4. **Smiling:** Begin the practice of intentionally smiling. A scientist studying facial expressions tells us that when people have smiles on their faces, they release more serotonin and endorphins (happiness hormones) than nonsmilers. Thich Nhat Hanh and the Dalai Lama are adamant that a smile is the first step to a life of mental, physical, and spiritual health. Begin a practice of smiling to shift any situation into an optimistic opportunity.
5. **Laughter:** Laugh as often as possible to release the healing hormones endorphins, the body's natural pain killers. Instead of buying pills for our stress, we can go rent a funny movie, or go online to a humorous site daily and share it with our coworkers. Laughter lowers blood pressure, reduces stress hormones, and boosts our immune function.
6. **Playfulness:** Reestablish "childlike" qualities. Science tells us that when we play, it increases the immune cells in our bodies that combat disease. Playfulness also increases creativity and optimism at home and at work.
7. **Health:** It is essential that we focus on the health of our bodies. When we care for our physical bodies, we create greater possibilities for happiness. Our bodies are our greatest asset, so please care for them tenderly.
8. **Spirituality:** The vast number of happy people have developed spiritual practices that nourish their heart and soul. Discover what brings your soul passion, love, and fulfillment. Our spirituality is what roots us in our lives.
9. **Altruism and Philanthropy:** A generous soul lives a rich, abundant life. Altruism neutralizes negative emotions that affect immune, endocrine, and cardiovascular function. Altruism creates a physiological response or "helpers high" that makes people feel stronger and more energetic and counters harmful effects of stress.
10. **Forgiveness:** Happy people know forgiveness sets the soul free. A famous person said, "Living with resentment is like taking poison and expecting the other person to get sick." Open your heart to the gift of happiness by letting go of pain, judgment, anger, and resentment.

