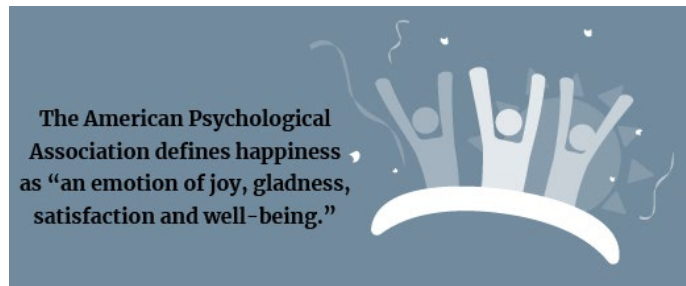




The Link Between Health and Happiness

In the pursuit of a fulfilling life, happiness is a goal for many. However, happiness is not an isolated concept; it's complex and connected to your overall physical and mental health. By understanding and nurturing the links between your health and happiness, you can be on your way to an enriched and balanced life.



The American Psychological Association defines happiness as “an emotion of joy, gladness, satisfaction and well-being.”

Physical Health and Happiness

Physical health forms the foundation upon which happiness thrives. When your body functions optimally, so can your overall sense of well-being. Consider the following strategies to optimize your physical health:

- **Exercise regularly.** Engaging in physical activity releases endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals, which elevate mood and reduce stress and anxiety. Exercise also boosts energy levels.
- **Focus on nutrition.** A balanced diet fuels the body and mind. Fruits, vegetables, whole grains, lean proteins and healthy fats provide nourishment to support cognitive function and emotional stability.

- **Get quality sleep.** Adequate and regular sleep positively influences mood, cognitive performance and emotional resilience.

Mental Health and Happiness

When you nurture your mind, happiness can flourish. Consider these tips for building your emotional resilience and a positive mindset:

- **Practice self-care and stress management.** It's critical to engage in activities that bring you joy and relaxation. Mindfulness practices can also reduce anxiety and improve focus.
- **Prioritize healthy relationships.** Positive social interactions, supportive friendships and a sense of belonging contribute significantly to happiness.
- **Seek help if needed.** Mental health professionals can provide guidance, therapy and tools to help you manage and overcome life's challenges.

The Path to Happiness

A healthy mind and body are critical components in your quest for happiness. By embracing a holistic approach to health, you can unlock the potential for a life filled with happiness, purpose and fulfillment. Contact a health care professional if you have any questions about your well-being.

Anxiety Screenings Recommended for Most Americans

The U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (Task Force) now recommends that adults under the age of 65 get regularly screened for anxiety. For the first time, the Task Force recommends screening all adults under 65 who don't have a diagnosed mental health disorder or related symptoms. This is meant to help primary care clinicians identify early signs of anxiety, which can go undetected for years.

The latest recommendation also focuses on screening for specific groups of people, especially those who are pregnant and have given birth within the past year. Last year, the Task Force recommended screening children ages 8 to 17 for anxiety. This now means all Americans ages 8 to 64 should be screened for anxiety. Anxiety disorders typically begin in childhood and early adulthood, and symptoms appear to decline with age. Contact a doctor if you have concerns about anxiety.

Anxiety Symptoms

Anxiety looks and feels different for everyone, so it's important to understand how anxiety can present itself. Here are common symptoms of anxiety:



Anxious thoughts that are difficult to control



Fatigue



Irritability



Restlessness



Sleep problems



Unexplained aches and pains



Trouble concentrating

How Often Do You Need to Exercise for Optimal Heart Health?

The American Heart Association recommends 150 minutes or more of moderate to vigorous physical activity each week but doesn't specify an optimal pattern. New [research](#) published in The Journal of the American Medical Association suggests that "weekend warriors" may realize the same cardiovascular health benefits as those who work out multiple times a week. A weekend warrior fits a week's worth of exercise into a couple of days.

The study found that working out at least 150 minutes each week can help cut one's risk of stroke, heart attack and atrial fibrillation (also known as AFib)—and those minutes can be split equally across the week or concentrated into the weekend. As long as you're hitting 150 minutes, you can reap cardiovascular benefits. The weekend warrior schedule could be an option if you're short on time during the week. Talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise regimen.

Makes: 6 servings

Ingredients

- ½ cup nonfat milk
- ⅓ cup applesauce
- ½ cup all-purpose flour
- ½ cup quick-cooking oats (uncooked)
- 1 cup sugar
- ½ Tbsp. baking powder
- ½ tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 tart apple (cored and chopped)

Preparations

1. Preheat oven to 400 F.
2. Place six cupcake holders in a baking tin.
3. Add the milk and applesauce to a mixing bowl. Stir until blended.
4. Stir in the flour, oats, sugar, baking powder and cinnamon, and mix until moistened.
5. Gently stir in the chopped apples.
6. Spoon the batter into the tin.
7. Bake for 15-20 minutes.
8. Cool muffins in the pan for 5 minutes before serving.

Nutritional Information (per serving)

Total calories	125
Total fat	1 g
Protein	3 g
Sodium	133 mg
Carbohydrate	28 g
Dietary fiber	2 g
Saturated fat	0 g
Total sugars	14 g

Source: MyPlate