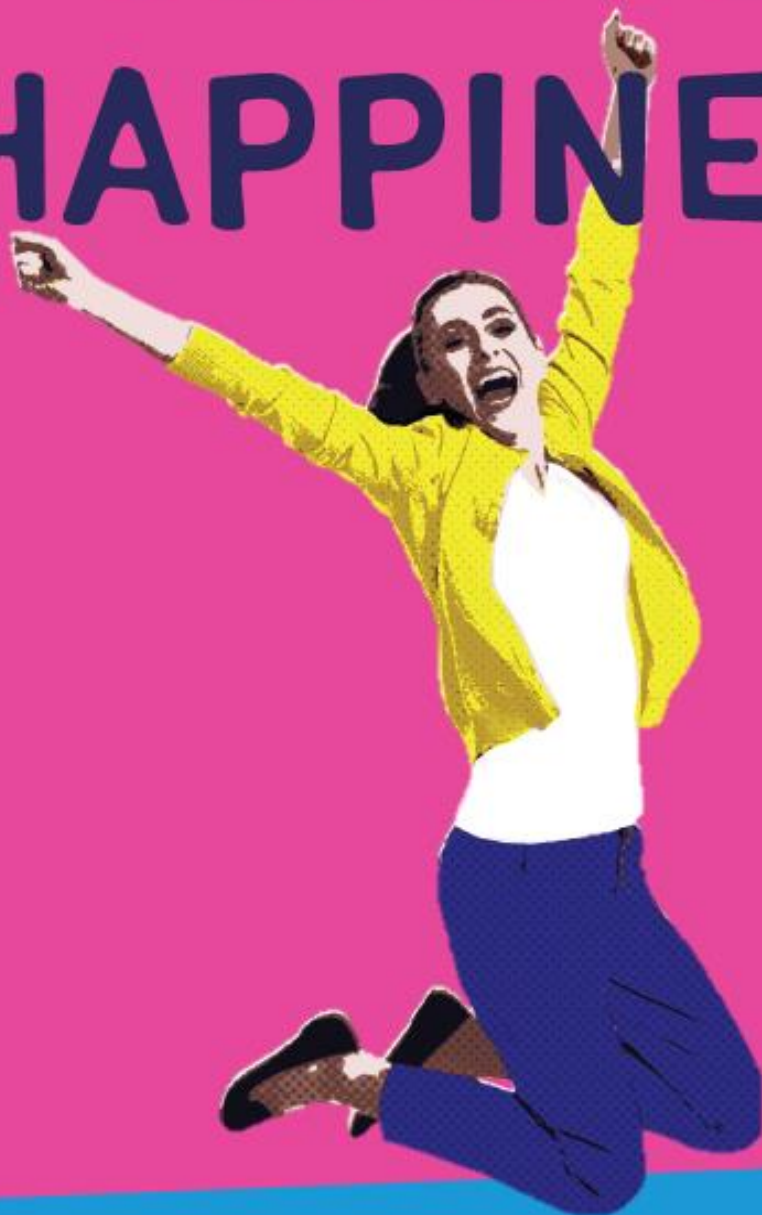


- ACTIVE U -
Take 20

ACTIVE HAPPINESS



Take 20! Being active for at least 20 minutes every day can go a long way towards keeping you healthy.



ACTIVE HAPPINESS

When you are physically active and exercising, your brain releases endorphins also known as the 'feel good' hormones. These can help calm anxiety, lift your mood, boost self-esteem, diminish stress levels and even reduce the risk of dementia. Alongside this, the sense of achievement you will feel when your general wellbeing and fitness levels improve, will help you feel better about yourself and possibly your outlook on life.

It is recommended that all adults should aim to be active daily and over a week, physical activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity. This could be as simple as 20 minutes per day! Moderate intensity activity is any physical activity that gets you out of breath or raises your heartbeat.

Even short bursts of ten minutes brisk walking can increase our mental alertness and help to reduce stress levels. Being active helps your body to control your cortisol levels - a stress hormone released during stressful periods, which at prolonged raised levels has been linked to certain disease risks.

Activities that can help people enjoy active happiness include yoga, tai-chi and Pilates. These activities are not only good for the body but also the mind, as breathing techniques are used when carrying out movements and this can help you to relax and switch off.

The great outdoors is also a brilliant way to enhance your general wellbeing and it's free! Just five minutes of activity and exercise in an outdoor space can provide fast improvement in mood and self-esteem.

Here are a number of things you can try to help your wellbeing and happiness through being physically active:

- Join or start a walking group, a good way to get active and meet new people
- Try purposeful activity to improve health or fitness, such as brisk walks, jogging, cycling or swimming
- Get a colleague to join you for a walk or a breath of fresh air during a break where possible – encourage a rule to not discuss work for the first five minutes to help clear your head and refresh
- Keep generally active throughout your day and outside of work to enable a happier, healthier life
- Experiment – if you don't know what you might enjoy, try a few different activities until you find what suits you. Going along to classes and activities with colleagues and friends can reduce the barrier of being nervous
- Listen to music or an audiobook if you need further motivation, relaxation or distraction to help you unwind, especially if you make a specific playlist for your walks or jogs
- Gardening or DIY projects can not only get you more active, they can help you feel more competent or capable to carry out daily tasks