

# THE ULTIMATE GUIDE TO MOOD MANAGEMENT

## 101 Ways To Elevate Your Mood

By The American Institute of Health Care Professionals, Inc.



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# What Is Mood

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Mood is a term used to describe a pervasive and sustained emotion that impacts a person's life. Essentially, they are a person's medium-term emotional state. A mood is shorter than a person's long-term temperament, but longer a person's impulsive response to an individual event.



Generally, moods are either positive or negative. In the fields of psychiatry and psychology, the term mood is typically used to refer to either elation (an emotional high) or depression (an emotional low).

## Why Mood is So Important for Your Personal Wellness and Life Quality

Mood plays such a significant role in our daily lives. One major way it impacts our personal wellness and life quality is by impacting the decisions made on a daily basis. The field of behavioral psychology explores the connection between emotions and behavior and outlines how mood and influence a person's behavior.

### Negative Mood

- When emotions impact mood, a person's judgment and ability to reason logically can be significantly impacted.
- A negative mood also impedes the brain ability to take in and process information. For this reason, staying in prolonged states of anger, sadness, worry, anxiety, depression, or frustration should be avoided as these psychological states and the moods they create prevent people from functioning at their full capacity.

## Positive Mood

- On the other hand, positive emotions help the mind and body function more optimally. Positive emotions such as love, empathy, and joy can influence the mood positively and lead to clear thinking, sound reasoning, and clear judgment (Qukula, 2016).

**Another reason mood is so important to wellness and quality of life is that it plays a role in our willingness and ability to help.**

Research has shown that positive moods are tied to various kinds of helping behavior such as giving blood, assisting coworkers, and donating to charity, among others. There are several reasons positive mood is linked to an increased desire to help.



- One reason is that a positive mood seems to indicate that the environment is safe and therefore we feel more free to assist others.
- Another reason good moods tend to lead to helping behavior is because we are more prone to like other people when we are in good moods, and when we like someone, we are more likely to assist them.
- A final reason good mood leads to helpful behavior is that when our mood is elevated, we feel better about ourselves. This confidence makes us feel more capable of helping others and therefore more likely to assist when a need arises (The role of affect: Moods and emotions, 2014).

To the contrary, negative moods decrease the likelihood of helping behavior.

- As a counter to each of the reasons listed above, first, when a person's mood is negative it can suggest that the environment is dangerous. This may lead us to feel unsafe and unable to offer assistance to another person.
- Secondly, Negative moods decrease the likelihood of offering assistance because we are less likely to be open to others and actually like them, meaning we are less likely to help people we don't like.
- Finally, when we possess a negative mood, we are more likely to feel poorly about ourselves and our abilities. This often means we feel incapable of offering the help others need in a given situation (The role of affect: Moods and emotions, 2014).

## Mood And Empathy In The Brain

Studies also show that mood can impact empathy in the brain.



A study published in *Psychophysiology* suggests that bad moods can negatively impact the neural wiring of centers in the brain tied to empathy. The study looked at 23 students from a Chinese university and hooked them up to an EEG to measure brain activity while having them listen to music or a broadcast that put them in a

good, bad, or neutral mood.

Participants were then shown pictures of people going through painful or neutral experiences—such as getting a hand shut in a door versus seeing a hand closing the same door. Afterwards,

they reported how much pain they thought the person in the picture felt and how painful it was for them to see these pictures (Suttie, 2017).

The study found that those participants who were in a bad mood showed brain activity that was linked to lowered emotional resonance with people in pain than participants who were in a positive or neutral mood. On the other hand, participants in a bad mood did not consistently make reduced ratings of another's pain in the painful scenarios.

So, while our bad moods may affect automatic, unconscious empathic processes, they seem to have less impact on cognitively controlled processes—such as imagining how another person might feel (Suttie, 2017). This pattern was mirrored in how they rated their own discomfort at seeing others in pain, suggesting that someone in a bad mood might be less empathic and less motivated to help a person suffering than someone in a good mood.



A similar study found that people in bad moods are less capable of mirroring people's actions and facial expressions. Essentially, both studies and others like it show that we are less in tune with others when our moods are negatively impacted (Suttie, 2017).

## Perception

**Our mood is also a valuable factor when it comes to personal wellness and life quality because it has the ability to impact our perception.**

Good moods tend to lead us to see things from a more positive lens. However, when we are in a negative mood it shades the lens through which we see the world and we tend to be more easily bothered, disturbed, annoyed, and even pained by the things we experience and encounter.

This is because moods have a direct connection with perception and thought. Thus, mood will lead you to recruit the areas of your cortex needed to manage a particular issue. If your mood is positive, you'll be able to choose which parts of the brain to recruit – internal vs. external. If your mood is negative, you'll essentially bypass the external for the internal (Whitbourne, 2016).

The Ghent University team led by Naomi Vanlessen and colleagues theorized that positive mood affects the way a person is able to take charge of their own thought processes in a process known as cognitive control.

- When mood is positive, a person can open their eyes and mind to what is taking place around them and pay attention to external stimuli, but when placed in a more challenging situation they can then focus their attention inward to address the challenge.
- However, a negative mood will cause people to focus their attention inward regardless of circumstances. This places people at a disadvantage because they focus on their own negative thoughts and feelings instead of being able to look outwardly to address the issue at hand (Whitbourn, 2016).



## Mood Disorders

Even more significantly, persistent mood issues can lead to serious mood issues such as mood swings and mood disorders. A mood swing is a term used to describe emotions that fluctuate rapidly and intensely. People who experience mood swings often describe them as being a roller coaster of emotions where they cycle through feelings of happiness to irritability to contentment, to frustration, and even depression (Schimelpfening, 2020).



Mood disorders describe a general emotional state or mood that is distorted or inconsistent with present circumstances and interferes with one's ability to live their daily life.

**Common mood disorders include (Mayo Clinic, 2018)**

- Bipolar disorder: disorder including alteration states of mania and depression
- Disruptive mood dysregulation disorder: disorder characterized by chronic, severe, and persistent irritability in children accompanied by frequent temper outbursts inconsistent with the child's developmental age
- Major depressive disorder: disorder characterized by prolonged and persistent periods of extreme sadness
- Persistent depressive disorder: long-term chronic depression
- Premenstrual dysphoric disorder: disorder characterized by mood changes and irritability during a woman's premenstrual phase of her cycle
- Seasonal affective disorder: depression associated with fewer hours of daylight from late fall to early spring

# Can You Control Or Improve Your Mood

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Mood can be influenced and controlled by a variety of factors. These factors can include both internal (things within the body) and external (things outside the body) elements.

## Internal Factors

### Hormones

Hormones can drastically impact mood. When not balanced we can experience huge shifts and swings in mood that make daily life more challenging. Hormonal imbalances can be caused by natural changes within the body such as menstrual cycles, menopause, and pregnancy.



### Medical Conditions

There are certain medication conditions that can impact the brain, particularly areas of the brain responsible for regulating emotion, which link them to mood swings. Chronic diseases and acute injuries such as dementia, Parkinson's disease, concussion, stroke, and sleep disorders among others all affect the emotion center brain and report patients who exhibit mood swings.

## External Factors

### Diet

One major way to control our mood is to control our diet. When our diet is lacking in nutrients, moods can change due to changes in blood sugar levels and/or malnourishment. Eating too many carbs or too much sugar can also affect blood sugar and cause fluctuations in mood as

blood sugar levels rise and fall. Not only that, but certain foods can impact our hormones which in turn can cause changes in our mood.

## Medication

There are medications that can be prescribed for a variety of conditions that have the ability to impact mood. Some medications do this by affecting hormones which influence mood. Others do this by affecting neurotransmitters in the brain that influence mood.

## Sleep

The amount of sleep a person gets can also influence mood. When a person experiences sleep-deprivation, especially on a chronic level, there can be severe mood fluctuations and other mental health symptoms that develop as a response. The circadian rhythm



naturally drives mood throughout the day as well, but if the circadian rhythm is thrown off due to poor sleep patterns, then our mood will be dysregulated throughout the day. Thus, to influence and control mood for the positive, getting adequate amounts of sleep is absolutely necessary.

## Substance Abuse

Illicit substances interfere with the parts of the brain that deal with reason and logic, as well as emotions. Those with substance abuse issues are more sensitive, erratic, and reactive than their sober counterparts. Additionally, they are more prone to experience severe shifts in mood when they are unable to obtain their substance of choice or when going through periods of withdrawal.

## Environment

The environment a person is exposed to has a lot to do with their overall mood. If the environment is toxic, negative, dangerous, or generally unpleasant, then a person's mood will typically follow suit. Thus, another way to control mood is to control the environment a person is in. Ensuring the environment is positive, uplifting, and encouraging will increase the likelihood of a person's mood being positive as well.



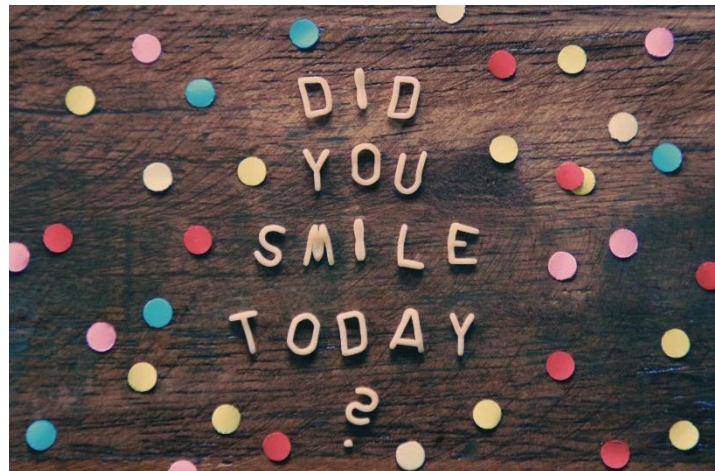
# 101 Ways To Lift Your Mood

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**Deep Breathing:** Deep breathing is a way to bring about calm via slow and intentional breathing practices. This technique sends signals throughout the brain and subsequently the body that initiates a relaxation process. This induced state of calm makes way for decreased stress and improved mood.

**Meditation:** Meditation is the practice of focusing intently for a set period of time. Numerous studies suggest that the act of meditating can help decrease feelings of anxiety and depression. Research conducted among long-term meditators has hinted at a heightened sense of awareness and greater emotional control. All of this means improved levels of emotional consciousness and improved mood overall.

**Wake Up Early:** Waking up early contributes to an improved mood by making you feel more in control of your day. When you wake up early you get an earlier start on your tasks, have more time to plan, and can complete the day's goals sooner than later leading to a sense of achievement and accomplishment.



**Journaling:** Research shows that writing out thoughts via pen and paper can be useful for boosting mood. As thoughts and emotions are put onto paper, people are given a place to work through their feelings and improve their mood by releasing those negative feelings and leaving them in a neutral place versus allowing them to ruminate in their minds.

**Gratitude:** Practicing gratitude is another way to go about lifting mood. Psychologists at UC Davis reported in a recent study that there was a link between optimism and gratitude. In the study, researchers had 3 groups of volunteers keep weekly journals focused on a single topic.

One group wrote about a major event, the second group wrote about hassles they experienced, and the third group wrote about things they were grateful for. After 10 weeks those in the group keeping the gratitude journal reported feeling more optimistic and satisfied overall than those in the other groups (Brodwin, Orwig, & Spector, 2016)

**Exercise:** Engaging in some type of exercise is another way to take a step towards lifting mood. Exercise releases chemicals in the brain shown to reduce stress hormones, decrease anxiety and depression, and enhance feelings of happiness. Researchers at the University of Vermont found that just 20 minutes of exercise can create mood-boosting benefits that last up to 12 hours. Their research also found that active people were generally happier and more satisfied with their lives



**Community:** Having the support of a community of people can be another strong way to lift mood. Friends, family, and other individuals who are a part of your community can offer mental, emotional, and physical support in a way that helps you cope with feelings and emotions, decompress, manage stress, and boost mood.

**Spend Time Outside:** Getting outside can almost instantly improve mood. The change of scenery and pace combined with the fresh air can enhance mood boosting signals in the brain and decrease overall stress and anxiety.

**Read a Book:** Reading is a means to decompress that can completely take you out of the present and away to an entirely different place (mentally). Reading has a way of transporting us to new

places via characters, setting, and plot lines that gives us the chance to escape from present stresses and decompress in a manner that calms us and boosts our mood.

**Power Posing:** It may seem silly, but there is some research to support the idea that the simple act of holding a power pose can decrease cortisol. Since cortisol is responsible for stress, a reduction in cortisol equates to an increase in confidence and a positive shift in mood.

**Have a Laugh:** Making time to laugh is an important part of mood management. Laughter reduces stress levels, and boosts mood by bringing about happiness and joy. Whether it's watching or listening to something that makes you laugh or engaging in an activity that brings about laughter, the act of laughing is sure to improve mood relatively quickly.



**Caffeine:** Taking some time to have coffee or another caffeinated beverage can also work to boost mood. Caffeine is often used to combat headaches, relieve sinus pressure, and boost energy. As these issues are alleviated, a boosted mood is a natural by-product of the other positive impacts.

**Adequate Rest:** As it turns out, the amount of sleep we get can impact our mood significantly. A lack of sleep can lead to increased anxiety, depression, and general fatigue which can impact mood for the negative. A simple step we can take to make sure our moods remain positive is ensure we get adequate sleep each night. By establishing a strong sleep routine ensuring we go through each of the sleep stages, our body gets the chance to recuperate and restore and lend itself to a better mood.

**Affirmations:** Affirmations are words or phrases that we recite that can alter our state of thinking and feeling. The idea is that by practicing positive affirmations we can influence our emotions

and subsequently our mood for the better. Choosing to focus on and repeat an affirmation such as “I am happy” or “Things will turn out good for me” can influence our mood towards the positive and cause us to believe the very affirmation over time.

**Optimism:** The outlook or perspective we hold regarding our lives, experiences, and circumstances can shape our mood negatively or positively. When we choose to look on the bright side and see the positives amongst the negatives or instead of the positives, we can influence our mood based on our outlook for the positive.

**Vitamin D:** Getting vitamin D via time spent in the sun or taking a supplement can be great for our mood. Vitamin D impacts mood centers in the brain and works to stabilize them, leading to an increase in the release of hormones that reduce stress levels and increase happiness. Just 15 minutes spent in the sun each day can dramatically boost mood.

**Weight Loss:** There has been research to suggest a link between obesity and depression or decreased mood. A 2010 study in the Archives of General Psychiatry found that obese people were at a higher risk of developing depression and reversely that depressed people were at greater risk of becoming obese.



**Play with an Animal:** Research from the University of Missouri-Columbia showed that petting a dog for a period of only 15 minutes released the hormones serotonin, prolactin, and oxytocin while simultaneously lowering the stress hormone cortisol (Health, 2020).



**Eat Chocolate:** Chocolate contains tryptophan which has been linked to mood-boosting serotonin within the brain. Some studies have found that even the taste, texture, and smell can improve our mood and increase our overall sense of happiness.

**Art:** Participating in art can influence mood for the better. A Boston College study showed that when participants created artwork as a means of expressing their negative feelings, they became happier with the effects lasting for hours to days after the art was created (Health, 2020).

**Diet:** The foods we eat can also influence our overall mood. Individuals who have low levels of omega-3 fatty acids and low levels of selenium are more likely to experience depression and dips in mood. A diet rich in omega-3s found in foods like fish, and rich in the antioxidant selenium which can be found in brazil nuts, as well as a diet rich in folate, which can be found in orange juice can help keep mood stable.

**Dance:** Research has shown that there is a link between dance and mental health. Studies have shown that dancing boosts mood and improves mental health because of the release of endorphins that occurs as the body moves.

**Eat Spicy Foods:** It turns out that eating spicy foods can also stimulate the release of endorphins in the brain that boost mood. Research shows that the spicier the food is, the better for overall mood it can be (Pietrzak, 2020).

**Don't Procrastinate:** Procrastination leads to stress and anxiety which can dramatically decrease our mood. Staying on top of our tasks prevents unnecessary stress and helps us feel in control of our work and responsibilities. This leads to an overall sense of calm and accomplishment that ensures mood is maintained at a positive level.

**Retail Therapy:** At times, a little shopping is just what you need to elevate your mood. No one is saying go broke spending but buying something as simple as your favorite body wash or cup of coffee can be a small joy in your day/week that brings you happiness.

**Stop Smoking:** In addition to the host of negative health effects that smoking can create in the body which can lead to a decreased mood, smoking itself is also linked to an increased risk of

depression. Additionally, those attempting to quit smoking and experiencing withdrawal symptoms are highly likely to feel more irritated and down as compared to their peers.

**Consider a New Paint Color:** As it turns out, the colors of rooms in the spaces we reside can actually impact our mood. In a study from the Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam, adults reported feeling happier around the colors blue and yellow. Blue was said to evoke feelings of being soothed and relaxed and reminded people of the sky and the ocean. Whereas yellow was reminiscent of the sunshine and brightness and therefore brought on feelings of being upbeat and joyful (Health, 2020).

**Physical Touch:** Human touch, in the form of hugging or holding hands releases endorphins such as serotonin that contribute to feelings of relaxation and contentment according to research. This leads to decreased stress and improved mood.

**Play a Game:** Playing games can be good for boosting mood. A study found that 91% of families reported playing games together improved their mood. The act of playing games brings joy, excitement, and joy that elevates mood.

**See a Therapist:** Therapists and counselors are trained medical professionals who can help you work through a host of mental and emotional concerns and conditions. Therapists can be great sounding boards, help you reason through issues and feelings, and help develop strategies for coping with emotions and problems that then help you move towards an overall improved mood.



**Acupuncture:** There are certain pressure points in the body that when gently stimulated by needles can release endorphins that boost mood, decrease anxiety, and minimize depression.

**Green Tea:** Green tea can be linked to a boost in mood. A US study found that drinking green tea can boost dopamine which is a neurotransmitter in the brain linked to enhanced mood.

**Cognitive Behavioral Therapy:** Cognitive behavioral therapy can help people improve mood by teaching them to alter their patterns of thinking for the positive. In therapy, patients learn to recognize harmful and irrational thoughts and how to replace them with more constructive and positive ones, thereby boosting mood.

**Interpersonal Therapy:** Interpersonal therapy is a means of addressing interpersonal conflicts and lack of social support that may be at the root of poor mood. Interpersonal therapy works to help individuals address relations with family, friends, co-workers, and other significant people in their lives to help improve communication and develop a more secure support network.



**Singing:** University of Manchester researchers found that there is an organ in the inner ear which responds to singing sounds and is connected to a part of the brain that registers pleasure. When someone sings, whether alone or in a crowd, it can contribute to feelings of happiness and improved mood (Health, 2020).

**Social Outings:** Social outings can also be another way to boost mood, as it is far more likely to experience depression and other negative impacts on mood when in isolation. Studies show that surrounding yourself with other happy people can increase the likelihood of happiness by nearly 9%.

**Avoid Negative People:** The company we keep can influence our mood heavily. If we are surrounded by people who are negative and pessimistic this is highly likely to influence our mood and perspective as well. Research suggests that being surrounded by people who complain and nag constantly can impact the odds of being negative also by about 9%.

**Limit Social Media:** There is research to show that spending too much time on social media can be damaging for our mood and self-esteem. One study found that the more participants used Facebook at a given time, the worse they felt the next time they used it. The more Facebook was used over a two week period, the more their levels of satisfaction with life declined over time (Schupak, 2015).

**Listen to Music:** Music can influence our mood in powerful ways. It impacts the mod centers of our brain and can actually make us more happy or more sad, depending on the song or playlist we choose. Thus, we can simply influence our mood by choosing upbeat songs that we associate with times and feelings of joy.



**Stretching:** Tension can be stored in our bodies which can influence our mood for the negative. Taking a moment to pause and stretch can release that physical tension, thereby reducing physical stress and inducing calm and improving overall mood in the body.

**Chew Gum:** There is evidence to suggest that the repetitive action of chewing on gum actually promotes relaxation and reduces anxiety and stress.

**Essential Oils:** There are certain essential oils known to possess stress and anxiety relieving benefits, as well as mood boosting benefits. Lavender is an oil known to induce calm and relaxation and is generally used for stress, anxiety, and sleep. While orange is an oil known to stimulate positive mood and alertness.

**Be Kind to Others:** Sometimes the simple act of doing something nice for someone else can do wonders for our mood. When we help others, it makes us feel good that we were able to be a blessing and gets the focus off of ourselves and any negative circumstances in our lives that may be causing us to feel negatively. This can be the shift we need to see a boost in our mood.

**Get Organized:** Evidence shows that a decluttered space can make us feel less stressed almost instantly. Just 10 to 15 minutes spent making our space more organized visually triggers something in the brain that induces calm and helps us feel better able to work, manage, and navigate through life.

**Have Sex:** There is a release of endorphins that occurs during sex and orgasm that can elevate the mood and contribute to reduced stress, decreased anxiety, and reduced risk of depression.

**Set Boundaries:** A failure to set boundaries can lead to overextending yourself and mounds of stress. When you set boundaries, you are able to protect yourself from people taking advantage of you and from doing more than you are truly capable of doing. This decreases stress and anxiety levels and helps you maintain a sense of balance and calm in your life that maintains a healthy mood.

**Probiotics:** A landmark UCLA study linked human gut bacteria to regions in the brain responsible for mood and mood-based behaviors. This demonstrated the vital importance of having a balanced gut for having a balanced mood.



Thus, one way to establish this balance is to take probiotics (Shea, 2019).

**Self-Care:** Self-care is the act of doing those things that prioritize your overall sense of well-being. When we are well cared for it is a given that our mood is improved because our needs (mental, physical, emotional, etc.) have been met.

**Massage Therapy:** There is a mind-body connection between mental health and massage therapy. This technique works to calm the body and release physical tension which in turn has an impact on the mental as well, leading to improved mood overall.

**Smile:** The simple act of smiling even if you don't authentically feel happy in the moment can actually lead you to feel happy. According to research, the act of smiling stimulates the production of serotonin, a hormone linked to positive feelings. So sometimes faking it until you make it is the route to take.

**Bang on Something:** It may seem silly, but researchers speculate that drumming can help the body feel more relaxed. A study published in 2016 found that group drumming reduced depression and anxiety, as well as improved social resilience in mental health service users over a 6 to 10 week span.

**Change Your Routine:** Doing the same thing day in and day out can make life too predictable, boring, and mundane. Changing your routine can do wonders for your mood by adding a spark of excitement and joy and giving you something to look forward to. From going somewhere new



to eating somewhere different to changing the location in your home where you typically work out or work from home- all of it can add a freshness that elevates the mood in a simple but impactful way.

**Bird Watching:** Researchers at the British Trust for Ornithology at the University of Exeter and the University of Queensland uncovered that there is a link between bird watching and improved mood. In their research they found that the higher the number of birds watched in an afternoon

the greater the reports of reduced depression, anxiety, and stress among participants (Ketchie, 2020).

**Cry:** It may seem counterintuitive to cry when you are trying to feel good, but sometimes a good cry session is needed to boost mood. Crying can release a build-up of negative emotions that can be impacting mood for the negative and then allow space for positivity and clarity of thought.

**Get Dressed Up:** When we look good, we tend to feel good. Even if you don't have plans to go out, the simple act of getting dressed up and making yourself look nice can make you feel good as well.

**Look at Photos from Happy Times:** Reminiscing about happy times by looking at old photos can be a positive way to boost mood. When we look at the old photos it can take us back to the positive memory and allow us to relive the positive feelings the memory creates, thereby enhancing our mood.

**Watch Cartoons/Favorite TV Shows:**

Watching cartoons from our childhood or our favorite television shows can bring us happiness. Allowing us to relive past experiences of joy or enjoy present laughter can improve our mood. Also, television can take us away from present realities which can be unpleasant and allow us to experience a bit of an escape as needed.



**Call a Friend:** The ability to talk with our close friends can bring joy, peace, and calm to our lives. Whether it's talking to vent and release emotions, talking to reminisce about good times, or talking to catch up and enjoy a laugh- all of these can work to reduce stress and promote calm which helps our mood.

**Be Silly:** It may be uncomfortable initially but letting your hair down and doing something silly can be very good for your mood. When you're able to be silly it means you are able to be free and uninhibited. This freedom allows us to experience joy. Our mood is therefore influenced for the better.

**Set and Reach Goals:** The feeling of checking something off of our to-do list can go a long way for boosting our mood. When we accomplish a goal, it makes us feel pride and dignity in ourselves that boosts our sense of belief and self-worth. So even if it's something small like taking out the trash or completing a workout, making sure we accomplish something each day will improve our mood.

**Have a Glass of Wine:** Enjoying a glass of wine can be a huge benefit for the mood because wine is reported to have a relaxing effect on drinkers. This effect brings about calm, reduces stress and anxiety, and makes drinkers feel more at ease which effectively improves their mood. However, this effect only appears to be true if drinks are kept to a minimum, as the effects of alcohol can become more negative and aggressive as the number of drinks consumed is increased.

**Take a Selfie:** A 2016 study found that taking pictures of yourself can actually lead to increased confidence. This in turn leads to enhanced feelings of happiness and improved overall mood.



**Live in the Moment:** Living in the moment is about tuning out the outside noise and choosing to focus on the here and now.

That can be good for helping us to avoid the anxieties that the future holds. Instead we learn to find the good and joy in what's taking place right in front of us and as a result, our mood benefits.



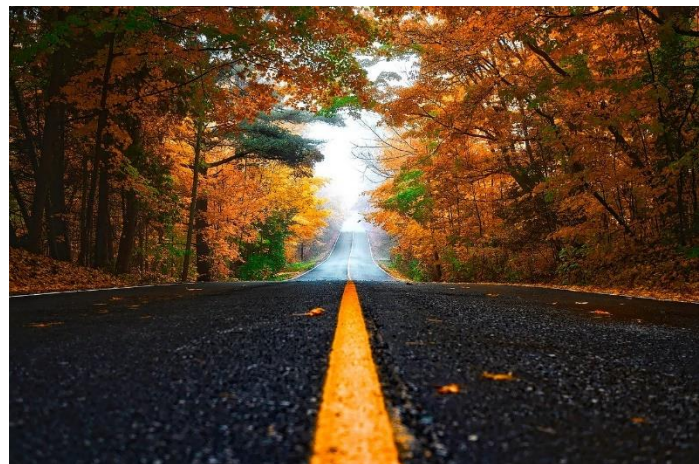
**Positive Self-Talk:** Positive self-talk is about the inner dialogue we have with ourselves. When we speak positive to ourselves, we subconsciously impact our thoughts to become more positive and as a result our mood improves.

**Watch Something Inspirational:** When we see something inspiring it uplifts our spirits and encourages our hearts. Whether it's a documentary about someone's life, a positive news story, or a short video on social media- finding something encouraging that will help us believe in the good of people, humanity, life, nature, etc. can make us feel more encouraged and improve our mood.

**Medication:** When in doubt, a medication can be a great way to boost mood. There are anti-depressants and anti-anxiety medications which can address hormonal and brain balance issues which can be the cause of low mood.

**Take a Shower/Bath:** The act of taking a shower or a bath brings about relaxation which can induce calm and improve mood. Taking the time to pause and shower/bathe offers the down time to reset, refresh, and recover.

**Go for a Drive:** Going for a drive is a simple way to take a break and change the scenery and pace in the middle of the day. Separating from the business of life, disconnect, and partake in an activity that requires little mental effort can be decompressing and allow for mood lift.



**Spirituality:** If you are a religious person, tapping into your spirituality can boost your mood by reminding you that there is a higher being in control. Releasing fears and anxieties by engaging in practices like prayer and reading spiritual texts can provide the calm and mental reset that helps you become more at ease and subsequently more at peace.

**Volunteer:** Spending some time less focused on self and more focused on the betterment of other people is a great way to boost mood. When we volunteer and help others, we get joy from seeing others benefit and find pleasure in our efforts and assistance which brightens our mood.

**Learn Something New:** The task of tackling and learning something new engages our brains and gives us the chance to focus on something positive and challenging. When we finally achieve that new task or activity it gives us a sense of pride that elevates our mood.

**Go for a Run:** Running is a therapeutic and effective means of mood management. Research has shown that running can be just as effective for depression as antidepressants. Using running a preventative mood management or to help address negative moods can be a highly effective strategy.

**Gardening:** Gardening can be a therapeutic and relaxing activity that allows participants to focus their efforts on something meaningful and rewarding. Gardening has been shown to offer restorative mental benefits as well as respite from mental stress.

**Limit Media Consumption:** At times, the media (news, entertainment, etc.) can be incredibly draining. Media can be filled with a lot of negative stories and tragic news that can take a toll on our mental state. Limiting the amount of time, we spend consuming media (watching/listening/reading news) can help us maintain a healthy balance of information and positive perspective on the world that doesn't jade us.

**Cook or Bake:** Cooking or baking is another example of a focused activity that yields a return which can be therapeutic and rewarding for participants. Cooking and baking is also known to have stress and anxiety reducing benefits



**Visit a Museum:** Museums can be places that offer mood-boosting benefits for visitors. A 2011 study from the Norwegian University of

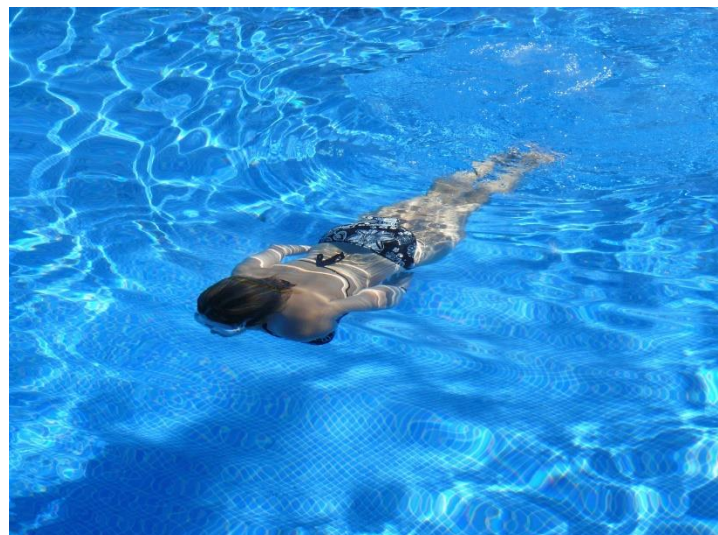
Science and Technology showed that visiting museums can lower the risk of anxiety and depression in men. Museums were also shown to reduce stress and have as great an impact on well-being as playing sports.

**Progressive Muscle Relaxation:** Progressive muscle relaxation is the process of strategically tensing and releasing muscles. This is often done to alleviate disruptive emotional symptoms and negative feelings. This technique of relaxation gets the body out of the fight or flight response and boosts mood by inducing calm.

**CBD:** CBD derives from the cannabis plant and produces effects in the body by reacting with cannabinoid receptors. When CBD is ingested or applied and reacts with CB1 receptors it can induce a calming effect in the brain and subsequently the body, effectively easing pain, soothing emotions, settling appetite, calming thinking, and boosting mood.

**Fishing:** Fishing is an activity that can reduce stress and anxiety and induce calm. The combination of time spent outdoors in the fresh air and sun, with the pleasure of engaging in an activity that is easy on the mind can be a great boost for the mood. Not only that but succeeding at catching fish can also create a sense of accomplishment that boosts mood.

**Go for a Swim:** Swimming, another form of exercise, can be great for boosting mood. Swimming laps have been shown to help the brain replace cells that have been lost through stress, effectively helping mood change for the better.



**Set a Routine:** Establishing a set pattern for how to go about your day or your week can help eliminate a lot of stress and anxiety that might lead to a negative mood. When you know what to expect, your expectations for the day

**Mindfulness:** Mindfulness is a practice that emphasizes awareness of thoughts, feelings, sensations as a means of gaining more insight, increasing attention, improving concentration, and enhancing self-control, among many other benefits. The ultimate idea being that via mindfulness producing improvements in these areas, positive changes can be made to influence our attitudes and behaviors for the better. Through mindfulness, we can reduce stress, gain greater control over our emotions, and decrease rumination which improves our mental health and boosts our mood.

**Flowers:** A study found that scent can play a role in mood and our experience of joy. Study participants placed in a floral scented room were found to select three times as many happiness related terms as opposed to negative terms when given a survey.

**Spend Time with Kids:** Connecting with children can reconnect us with the innocence of our youth and the joys of childhood. The sweetness, kindness, and innocence children possess often can instantly bring us to a place of happiness and calm and reduce stress levels.

**Sustainability Mindset:** A sustainability mindset is one that focuses on the big picture, not just the right now. This type of mindset helps us not get stuck on all the bad of the present. This mindset helps us get through tough times by giving us something to look forward to in the future, essentially giving us hope and improving our mood in the process.

**Alone Time:** Sometimes time alone can recenter and refocus you, thereby getting you away from the chaos and cause of stress long enough to return to a place of calm, which can improve your mood.

**Turn Off Your Phone:** Phones can be great but being available to everyone all the time can be an incredible drain that leaves



you feeling stressed. Turning your phone off for periods of time and going silent/dark can give

you the freedom and quiet time to regroup and return back to a neutral state of calm and increase mood.

**Forgiveness:** When we harbor up bitterness and old hurts in our heart it weighs heavily on our emotions. Being intentional about forgiving people from our past that we are holding things against can free us from the negative emotional burdens and open our hearts to experience more happiness and joy.

**Take a Vacation:** A trip away can be great for your mind. Getting away to a new place can take us away from the mundane nature of our daily life and give us something exciting to look forward to. The new scene and experiences can boost our mood, anticipation, and sense of joy.

**Give a Compliment:** When we go out of our way to make someone else feel good by giving them a compliment, we can also make ourselves feel good. Seeing the joy, we've been able to bring others in turn brings joy into our own lives.

**Reduce Workload:** Cutting down on the amount of work and responsibilities you have can drastically work to improve mood. When you are overworked and stressed out your mood and be negative because you are anxious, worried, and drained. However, when you cut down on your workload you reduce stress and anxiety and improve your mood.

**Do Something on Your Bucket List:**

When you do an activity, you've had on your bucket list your mood will improve because you're doing something you've always wanted to do and because you've accomplished something meaningful to you.



**Watch Your Posture:** Simply put, our posture can affect our mood. If we are slumped and slouched our mood is more likely to be

negative. However, if we are upright and tall, our mood is more likely to be confident and positive.

**Magnesium:** Ensuring adequate magnesium intake via supplement or diet (i.e. beans, peas, legumes, etc.) is known to boost energy and overall mood. Just two servings of magnesium rich foods each day can result in elevated mood.

**Stay Hydrated:** Believe it or not, dehydration can contribute to a decrease in mood. Not only can dehydration lead to a host of health ailments that can create discomfort and pain leading to decreased mood, but the dehydration itself can take a toll on the mind, draining it of brain power and leaving it more susceptible to frustration, anxiety, and overall unhappiness.

**Celebrate Something Positive:** Finding something positive in your life or the life of someone around you that you can celebrate is an easy way to bring about joy and elevate mood in the process.

**Do Nothing:** Sometimes the body and the mind simply need time to relax and recuperate. Time spent doing absolutely nothing can be great for allowing the mind to decompress and reset, bringing about relaxation and contributing to depression.

**Stay Hopeful:** Ultimately, choosing not to give up in the midst of less than positive circumstances is key to maintaining a positive mood. When you choose to focus on the possible good that can come out of a situation as opposed to the bad, you set positive expectations and give yourself something to look forward to.



**Compliment Yourself:** Finding at least one thing about yourself that you like to highlight each day can enhance your sense of confidence. When you believe more in yourself and your abilities, you are more likely to have a positive outlook and mood.

**Believe in Yourself:** Believing in yourself is about understanding that you possess the knowledge and ability to achieve a particular goal. Having a general belief in yourself increases your confidence levels and makes you feel more competent and capable. As a response your mood is improved because of this enhanced belief in yourself.

**Be Yourself:** Being yourself is about living free from expectations that other people might set for you. When you release yourself from what other people might want or expect you to be the burden of trying to live up to what other people want is released and you can experience the joy of living your truth.

## Final Thoughts

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Simply put, mood matters. It is vital that we take necessary measures to manage our mood and keep it positive so that our ability to empathize, reason, make decisions, and help others remains intact. Additionally, maintaining a positive mood helps us to decrease the likelihood of developing mood disorders.

When we are intentional about paying attention to the internal and external factors that can influence our mood and take measure to positively impact them and our mood for the better, we can live happier lives and benefit from improved mood overall.





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