

## Positive Health Tools

These activities have been extracted from the following book:

[“Positive Health: 100+ research-based positive psychology and lifestyle medicine tools for enhancing your wellbeing” by J. Burke, P. Dunne, T. Meehan, C. O’Boyle, C. van Nieuwerburgh.](#)

### 1. Sleep for all

[Unplug \(adapted from Hughes & Burke, 2018\)](#)

For the next seven days, switch off all your devices one hour before going to bed. This includes your smartphone, computer, tablet, tv etc. Finding alternative ways to spend your time without the phone is the last thing you would see before falling asleep.

### 2. Sleep for parents

[Maintain routine with children \(adapted from Mindell et al., 2009\)](#)

If you have an infant or toddler at home, follow a three-step routine for the next two weeks to help them and you sleep better:

- Bath your child.
- Massage them, or apply age-appropriate oil or moisturiser for older children.
- Engage in quiet activities (e.g. cuddling, lullaby singing, book reading) and ensure that the lights are switched off within 30 minutes from the end of the bath.

### 3. Nutrition

[Blue zone diet \(Buettner & Skemp, 2016\)](#)

The eating habits of blue zone inhabitants:

- Consume fewer daily calories
- Less than 5% of the diet is comprised of meat and fish
- Eat fresh fruit and vegetables
- Consume beans and nuts daily

### 4. Physical activity

[Daily activity records \(adapted from Speck & Looney, 2001\)](#)

All you are asked to do is complete daily activity records for 12 weeks. First, you note any activity you engaged in for the day, be it walking, chores, childcare, or others. You also need to note the intensity of your activity, i.e. if it was moderate or vigorous. Finally, you are asked to use a pedometer, and when completing your daily activity records, you are asked to note how many steps you have taken during the day. This simple activity resulted in participants' significant increase in physical activity.

## 5. Reminiscence

Reminiscence (adapted from Bryant et al., 2004)

Write down a list of several positive memories from the past. Then, set aside 10 min to sit quietly once or twice a day over the next week. Select one memory at a time to reflect on. You can do it by sitting down, taking a few deep breaths in and out, closing your eyes and thinking intensely about the memory. You will see images emerging to this memory, followed by emotions. Allow your mind to wander while you bask in the positive events from your past.

## 6. Humour

Three Funny Things (adapted from Gander, Proyer, Ruch & Wyss, 2013)

Over the next week, set aside 15 minutes every evening and write down the three funniest things that have happened to you during the day. Reflect on the reasons why those things happened and describe how they made you feel.

## 7. Character Strengths

Use your signature strengths (adapted from Seligman et al., 2005).

- Complete the VIA character strengths assessment ([www.viacharacter.org](http://www.viacharacter.org))
- While all 24 strengths are of interest, focus on your top 5-7 strengths, your *signature strengths*.
- Every day for the next week, use your top (signature) strengths in a new and different way. For example, you might use “Love of Learning” to find new ways to overcome challenges; the strength of “Kindness” to do a favour for a friend; the strength of “Zest” to do something because you really want to do it, not because you think you should.

## 8. Positive Anticipation

Looking forward to tomorrow (adapted from Littmann-Ovadia & Nir, 2014)

Every day, over the next seven days, take five minutes to write down three good things (people or events) that you are looking forward to experiencing tomorrow. Then, select one the thing that you are waiting for, and for the next five minutes, try to experience it wholeheartedly ahead of time.

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| How to maximise the impact of positive experiences ( <i>Quoidbach et al., 2015</i> ) |
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1. Select a situation, e.g. go out to a restaurant
2. Modify a situation, e.g. select a table with a view
3. Pay attention, e.g. notice the atmosphere, sound, smell
4. Change your thinking, e.g. appreciate the moment
5. Modulate your response, e.g. tell your partner how you feel