

## 5 Things That Can Make You Happier

Here are five things that research has shown can improve happiness:

1. **Be grateful** -- People who were asked to write letters of gratitude to people who had helped them in some way reported a lasting increase in happiness -- over weeks and even months -- after implementing the habit. Even when people wrote letters but never delivered them to the addressee, they still reported feeling better afterwards.
2. **Be optimistic** -- People were asked to visualize an ideal future and describe the image in a journal entry. After doing this for a few weeks, these people too reported increased feelings of well-being.
3. **Count your blessings** -- People who practice writing down three good things that have happened to them every week show significant boosts in happiness. The act of focusing on the positive helps people remember reasons to be glad.
4. **Use your strengths** -- Another study asked people to identify their greatest strengths, and then to try to use these strengths in new ways. This habit, too, seems to heighten happiness.
5. **Commit acts of kindness** -- It turns out helping others also helps ourselves. People who donate time or money to charity, or who altruistically assist people in need, report improvements in their own happiness.

### Sources:

» [Msnbc.com Health](http://Msnbc.com Health)