

31 Days to Waking Up Happy for Life



1. Catch Some Zzz's—the Right Way

Turkish researchers found that people who tend to [sleep on their right side](#) have mellow dreams, with themes of relief, joy, peace and love. They also report feeling [better rested and less dysfunctional during waking hours](#).

2. Don't Dream in Half-Light

Four weeks of sleeping in a 5-lux glow—the equivalent of nightlights, streetlights, a TV or computer screen—suppressed levels of the feel-good hormone melatonin and shrank parts of the hippocampus, leading to [moodiness and despondency](#). (Note: Depressive symptoms vanished after two weeks of pitch-dark slumber.)

3. Rethink Your Shower

Researchers theorize that ending your shower with a decrease in water temperature (to about 68°F), and staying under the spray for two to three minutes, may trigger neurotransmitters in the brain that produce a sense of well-being.

4. Have a Little Tulip with Your Coffee

[In a study](#) led by Harvard Medical School psychologist [Nancy Etcoff, PhD](#), women who saw flowers when they woke up reported [feeling happier \(and less anxious\) at home, as well as more energetic at work](#).

5. Soak Up Antidepressant Rays

Step outside for a half hour, or so, if you can. The morning light—especially from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.—may be [more effective in curing the winter blues](#) than late-afternoon or evening light.

6. ...Just Don't Forget One Thing

On the sunniest days, we squint; and squinting can make us angry, explains [Daniele Marzoli, PhD](#), a psychologist at Italy's University of Chieti-Pescara. Since mood and facial muscles are linked, your face signals to your brain that you're irritated (even if you weren't...initially). To make matters worse, the tetchiness flares up almost *instantly*, explains Dr. Marzoli. Luckily, this one has a simple, fast-acting and potentially elegant remedy: sunglasses.