

SAVORING WALK

Difficulty: **MODERATE** | Frequency: **1X/DAY** | Duration: **15 MINS**

WHY YOU SHOULD TRY IT

In our daily lives, we don't always notice or acknowledge the pleasant and positive things around us. We may be in a rush, distracted by other thoughts, or busy checking our phones. As a result, we miss opportunities for positive experiences and positive emotions—the building blocks of long-term happiness.

Research suggests that we can maximize the benefits of the good things around us by consciously savoring them rather than letting them pass us by or taking them for granted. This exercise offers one basic way to start savoring the bounty of goodness around us—not by going to some exotic destination but by paying more careful attention to the sights, smells, and sounds we often neglect.

TIME REQUIRED

20 minutes daily for at least one week.

HOW TO DO IT

Set aside 20 minutes to take a walk outside by yourself every day for a week. Try to stick to this schedule unless the weather is extremely bad. You can still do this exercise in a light rain—provided you have a decent umbrella and rain jacket.

As you walk, try to notice as many positive things around you as you can. These can be sights, sounds, smells, or other sensations. For example, you could focus on the breathtaking height of a tree you never really noticed before, the intricate architecture of a building on your block, the dance of sunshine off a window or puddle, the smell of grass or flowers, or the way other people look out for each other as they navigate crowded streets.

As you notice each of these positive things, acknowledge each one in your mind—don't just let them slip past you. Pause for a moment as you hear or see each thing and make sure it registers with your conscious awareness, really take it in. Try to identify what it is about that thing that makes it pleasurable to you.

Try to walk a different route each day so you don't become too accustomed to any of these things and start to take them for granted.

EVIDENCE IT THAT WORKS

Bryant, F. & Veroff, J. (2007). *Savoring: A new model of positive experience*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

American participants who were encouraged to maintain a positive focus during daily walks for one week reported a greater increase in happiness at the end of the week, compared to participants who were encouraged to maintain a negative or neutral focus during their walks.

Who Has Tried the Practice?

In one other study, [undergraduates in New Zealand](#) (mostly white and Asian) took a 20-minute walk each day for seven days straight. Students who reported savoring the walk more strongly experienced more positive emotion compared to students who did not savor their walks as much.

More research is needed to explore whether, and how, the impact of this practice extends to other groups and cultures.

WHY TO TRY IT

Taking the time to “stop and smell the roses”—what researchers call “savoring”—can enhance happiness and boost feelings of appreciation and gratitude. Savoring helps us deepen the impact that positive events have on our emotional lives—rather than just slipping from our awareness, or failing to register in the first place, these events sink into our minds and stay with us long after they are over. By becoming more attuned to our surroundings, we may also be more likely to connect with the people around us, even if it’s just to share a smile

SOURCES

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This practice is part of [Greater Good in Action](#), a clearinghouse of the best research-tested methods for increasing happiness, resilience, kindness, and connection, created by the [Greater Good Science Center](#) at UC Berkeley and [HopeLab](#).

