

# Wellness Wednesday



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## Little Phrases That Brought Significant Joy to People

Happiness is a subjective experience that varies from person to person. While major life changes and achievements can certainly bring joy, it's often the small, everyday habits and actions that have the most significant impact on our overall happiness. In this Wellness Wednesday, we'll explore 15 small things that people have found to make a drastic improvement in their happiness levels. These simple practices can be easily incorporated into your daily routine, allowing you to cultivate a more positive and fulfilling life.



### 1. Cultivate Strong Connections with Loved Ones

One of the most effective ways to boost happiness is by nurturing meaningful relationships with family and friends. Taking the time to connect with loved ones on a regular basis can bring immense joy and fulfillment. Whether it's picking up the phone to call a family member, scheduling regular meetups, or simply spending quality time together, these interactions can deepen bonds and create lasting memories.

Kim Murstein, co-host of the Excuse My Grandma podcast, shares her experience of checking in with her Grandma Gail every day. She highlights the profound impact that these lighthearted conversations have had on their bond and overall happiness. It's remarkable how something as simple as connecting with a loved one can bring immense joy and fulfillment to our lives.

"I always check in with my Grandma Gail. Even if the conversations are lighthearted, they deepen our bond and understanding of each other. It's amazing how something as simple as connecting with a loved one in this way can bring such joy and fulfillment to my life." - Kim Murstein

### 2. Establish an Electronics Curfew

In today's digital age, it's easy to get caught up in the endless scrolling of social media and the constant stimulation of electronic devices. However, setting boundaries and establishing an electronics curfew can significantly improve your well-being and quality of sleep.

Stacy B. found that implementing an electronics curfew before bed has made a world of difference in her sleep and mental health. By avoiding social media, internet scrolling, and any device usage for at least an hour before bedtime, she creates a peaceful environment that promotes relaxation and better sleep.

"About three years ago, I stopped plugging my phone in next to my bed at night. It has made a world of difference in my sleep and mental health. Now my phone gets charged in the kitchen next to the coffee pot, and I don't look at it right before bed or first thing in the morning. Game changer!" - Stacy B.

### 3. Focus on the Positive Aspects of Your Spouse

In any relationship, it's natural to encounter moments of irritation or annoyance. However, consciously shifting your focus from the negatives to the positives can have a profound impact on your happiness and the overall health of your relationship.

Angela B. shares her experience of intentionally thinking of something positive about her husband whenever he irritates or annoys her. By taking the time to reflect on his admirable qualities and express appreciation, she has transformed their relationship for the better, leading to increased happiness and fulfillment.

"One thing I started doing 10-15 years ago is any time my husband irritated me or annoyed me, which is often, I would think of something positive about him that I admire and appreciate — and there are many! It really, really changed our relationship for the better, which makes both of us happier." - Angela B.

### 4. Embrace Acceptance with "And That's OK"

Life is filled with ups and downs, and it's easy to get caught up in negative thought patterns when things don't go as planned. However, adopting a mindset of acceptance by adding the phrase "and that's OK" to the end of your sentences can help alleviate stress and promote resilience.

Hayley Quinn, a London-based dating coach, emphasizes the power of this simple phrase in diffusing negative emotions and reframing challenges as opportunities for growth. By acknowledging that life's ups and downs are workable and temporary, you can cultivate a more positive and resilient outlook.

"There are many times where saying, '...and that's OK' helps to take the sting out of life's inevitable ups and downs: I just dropped a tub of hummus on the floor..., 'my son has head lice..., 'I forgot to change our holiday flights...' AND THAT'S OK. Instead of going into a doom spiral of something I haven't achieved or have spectacularly messed up, this simple three-word phrase helps me to realize that everything I have to contend with is workable." - Hayley Quinn

### 5. Harness the Power of Aromatherapy

Our sense of smell is closely linked to our emotions, and certain scents have the power to evoke positive feelings and improve our mood. By incorporating pleasant fragrances into your daily routine, you can create a more uplifting environment and enhance your overall well-being.

Natalya Jones, a writer based in Florida, shares her newfound fascination with perfume and how it has brought her immense joy. Exploring different scents, learning about various brands, and indulging in the ritual of applying perfume has become a form of self-care that instantly puts her in a good mood.

"My new hyper-focus is perfume, and it's been so fun learning about different notes, new releases, various brands, how it changes over time on your skin. I've made a point to use perfume I absolutely love, even if I'm at home all day in leggings and a t-shirt. Getting whiffs of a fragrance I love instantly puts me in a good mood. Plus, I love the ritual of putting it on in the morning, after a shower, and before bed. It's indulgent self-care, and it makes me so content." - Natalya Jones

### 6. Embrace a Loved One's Hobby

When we engage in activities that bring us joy, it's natural to want to share those experiences with our loved ones. Anne G. discovered the joy of sewing by picking up her late mother's hobby. By using her mother's sewing machine, she not only keeps her memory alive but also finds solace and peace in creating beautiful purses, totes, and backpacks.

"I started sewing like my mother. When mom passed, I wanted to use her nearly new machine to keep connected to her memory. Years later, I have a heavy-duty machine and regularly make purses, totes, and backpacks to keep my zen." - Anne G.

## 7. Validate Yourself Instead of Seeking External Validation

Seeking validation from others can be a never-ending cycle that leaves us feeling empty and insecure. To cultivate greater happiness and self-confidence, it's essential to recognize and validate yourself in all aspects of your life. Dagny Zenovia, a writer living in Ghana, shares her experience of intentionally recognizing and validating herself. By acknowledging her own worth and celebrating her achievements, she has become less reliant on external validation and more capable of caring for herself.

"Something small I started doing a while ago is being intentional and consistent in recognizing and validating myself in every aspect of my life. This gradually helped me take my power back from seeking validation from others and leaning too much into fulfilling others' expectations. This has made me drastically happier because I now see myself, hear myself, and care for myself much better." - Dagny Zenovia

## 8. Take Time for Nature with Long Hikes



Spending time in nature has been proven to have numerous mental health benefits, including reduced stress, improved mood, and increased feelings of well-being. Incorporating regular hikes into your routine allows you to connect with the natural world and reap the rewards of being outdoors.

Zoe J. discovered the joy of hiking after a long recovery from an operation. Starting with short walks and gradually building up to longer hikes, she found solace, stress relief, and a sense of accomplishment in immersing herself in nature. Additionally, the physical activity and fresh air contribute to improved overall well-being. "I go for increasingly

longer hikes on the weekend. After a long recovery from an operation last year which took away the ability to eat and speak for months, I was looking for something to do in nature. I started 30-minute mini-walks, which exhausted me at first, but eventually, I built up to three to four hours. I didn't think I'd enjoy it as much as I do! I smile so much, and it's helped sort out my stress, just breathing out." - Zoe J.

## 9. Limit Exposure to News

While staying informed about current events is important, consuming excessive amounts of news can be overwhelming and negatively impact our mental well-being. Barbara B., a former journalist, shares her experience of reducing news consumption to maintain her happiness.

"I used to be a journalist, so I always had a news channel on in the background — I always had to be the first to know. Now, not watching the news makes me happy. Don't get me wrong. I still keep up. I want to be informed. But now, I check the headlines once, sometimes twice, a day. I'm not as depressed." - Barbara B.

## 10. Practice Mindfulness and Thought Awareness

Our thoughts have a significant impact on our emotions and overall well-being. Sherry B. discovered the power of not getting caught up in every thought that arises. By practicing mindfulness and thought awareness, she gained control over her mind and found freedom from overthinking and rumination.

"I learned not to 'follow' every thought that arises. It helps me not overthink and ruminate. I am no longer a slave to my mind." - Sherry B.

### 11. Engage in Language Learning

Learning a new language not only expands your horizons but also stimulates your brain and boosts your overall happiness. Rachael Adele L. shares her experience with Duolingo, an app that allows her to practice Portuguese every morning. Her dedication to language learning has not only improved her language skills but has also led to personal growth and enriching travel experiences.

"I play Duolingo every morning. I have 868 days of Portuguese under my belt and have been to Lisbon twice and Rio once since starting." - Rachael Adele L.

### 12. Rekindle an Old Hobby

During the COVID-19 lockdown, many people found themselves with more free time on their hands. Aimee B. took this opportunity to rediscover her love for playing the piano. Reconnecting with this old hobby not only exercised a different part of her brain but also reduced stress and filled her home with beautiful music.

"During the COVID lockdown, I started playing the piano again, something I hadn't done since college. It exercises a different part of my brain, reduces stress, and makes me happy to fill our house with music. I found a new composer I love to play, and smile when my husband and kids clap from wherever they are in the house when I finish!" - Aimee B.

### 13. Pursue a Longtime Dream

Bec Anne found joy in pursuing a hobby she had always wanted to try—building miniatures and book nooks. By channeling her childhood desire for a haunted dollhouse, she now creates tiny, witchy pieces that bring her immense happiness as an adult. "I started building miniatures and book nooks. I always wanted a haunted dollhouse when I was little, and nothing makes me happier than when I sit down and make tiny, witchy pieces now as an adult!" - Bec Anne

### 14. Foster Animals in Need

Contributing to the well-being of others can bring immense joy and a sense of purpose. Anthea H. began fostering cats and kittens for a local shelter, and the experience has brought her ongoing satisfaction and fulfillment. Opening her home to these animals in need has not only improved their lives but has also enhanced her own happiness. "I began fostering cats and kittens for a local shelter two years ago, and I'm still going. It brings me joy and satisfaction." - Anthea H.

### 15. Cultivate a Garden

Gardening is a therapeutic and rewarding hobby that can bring immense happiness. Ginger M. recently planted a salsa garden, allowing her to grow the ingredients needed for her homemade salsa. The process of nurturing plants and enjoying the delicious results provides a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction. "I recently planted a salsa garden! I make and can my own salsa, and it's not only fun but delicious!" - Ginger M.

### Final Thoughts

Remember, happiness is not solely determined by major life events or achievements but can be found in the small, everyday actions we take. By incorporating these 15 small things into your daily life, you can drastically improve your happiness and overall well-being. Happiness is a journey, and each small step towards cultivating joy and fulfillment is worth celebrating. So, start incorporating these practices into your life today and experience the positive impact they can have on your happiness.



# PROTEIN WAFFLES



## INGREDIENTS

2/3 cup 4% milk fat small curd cottage cheese

2 large eggs, separated

1 teaspoon vanilla extract

1 tablespoon sugar (optional)

1 cup oat flour (or grind old-fashioned rolled oats in a blender)

1/2 teaspoon baking powder

1/4 teaspoon kosher salt

When it comes to starting your day off right, a nutritious and satisfying breakfast is essential. And what better way to kickstart your morning than with a stack of protein-packed waffles? These high-protein waffles are not only delicious but also incredibly easy to make. Whether you're a fitness enthusiast looking to fuel your workouts or simply someone who wants to enjoy a guilt-free breakfast, these waffles are the perfect choice.

### WHY PROTEIN WAFFLES?

Protein waffles are a fantastic breakfast option for several reasons. Firstly, they provide a substantial amount of protein, which is essential for building and repairing muscles, promoting satiety, and supporting overall health. Secondly, they are incredibly versatile, allowing you to customize your toppings and add-ons to suit your taste preferences. Lastly, they are quick and easy to make, making them a great option for busy mornings.

### Nutrition Information

Cals: 121 Protein: 8.5 Carbs: 12 Fat: 4.5

Yield: 5 servings

Serving Size: 2 small waffles (1/2 cup batter)





## INSTRUCTIONS



## HOW TO MAKE IT

1. Heat a waffle iron on its medium setting.
2. Place cottage cheese, egg yolks, vanilla, and sugar (if using) in a blender. Add 6 tablespoons of water, oat flour, baking powder, and salt. Blend until the mixture becomes a smooth batter.
3. Transfer the batter to a medium bowl, making sure to scrape out all the batter from the blender using a spatula.
4. In a separate bowl, beat the egg whites until they form soft peaks. Gently fold the beaten egg whites into the batter.
5. Spray the pre-heated waffle iron with oil spray. Pour about 1/4 cup of batter onto the iron and cook until the waffles turn golden brown and no steam is being released.
6. Repeat the process until all the batter is used, making sure to spray the waffle iron with oil before each new batch.
7. Serve the waffles warm and top them with your favorite toppings, such as nut butter, fresh fruits, or pure maple syrup.

### ***Versatile Toppings***

One of the best things about these waffles is their versatility. You can top them with a wide variety of ingredients, allowing you to switch up the flavors and textures. From fresh fruits like bananas and berries to nut butter, pure maple syrup, or even a dollop of whipped cream, the options are endless. Get creative and customize your toppings to create the perfect waffle experience.

<https://www.self.com/gallery/bodyweight-exercises-you-can-do-at-home>

## Featured Exercise ► Spider-Man Mountain Climbers



### HOW TO DO IT:

- Start in a high plank.
- Drive your right knee out and up toward your right tricep. As you do, turn your head to watch your knee meet your arm.
- Alternate sides as fast as you can while still maintaining a sturdy plank and keeping your torso in place.

### THE BENEFITS:

Spiderman Mountain Climbers engage multiple muscle groups simultaneously, making them an efficient exercise for a full-body workout. The primary muscles targeted include the core muscles (abdominals, obliques), hip flexors, quadriceps, and shoulders. Additionally, the stabilizer muscles in the arms, chest, and back are activated to maintain a strong and steady plank position.



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Regular exercise can help you control your weight, reduce your risk of heart disease, and strengthen your bones and muscles. But if it's been awhile since you've exercised and you have health issues or concerns, it's a good idea to talk to your doctor before starting a new exercise routine.



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