



# Be mindful of happiness

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Strategy is to focus more on building strengths rather than fixing weaknesses

ARE YOU struggling to get yourself to the gym in the mornings or, even worse, into the office on time? Have you started salivating over egg and bacon rolls and chocolate mousse cake even though you know lean meat and green vegetables are the ingredients to be drooling over?

Fear not. According to clinical and coaching psychologist Dr Tim Sharp, it is normal to have to give yourself a little motivational pick-me-up in March.

"Some say motivation doesn't last, but that's why we need to work on it each and every day, just like having a shower or brushing our teeth," Dr Sharp says.

Dr Sharp is a leading international exponent of "positive psychology", which began as an exciting new science about 15 years ago but is now rapidly establishing itself as one of the dominant approaches to health,

wellbeing, success and happiness.

"Positive psychology differs from previous approaches by focusing more on building strengths rather than fixing weaknesses," says Dr Sharp.

"It aims towards living a

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great life rather than just surviving and living an 'OK' life."

He says that the body of research that's evolved from the positive psychology field in recent years has been nothing short of revolutionary, and it is now possible to say with confidence that we

can all be happier and live better lives if we practise the evidence-based strategies of the discipline.

"By creating a positive and meaningful vision of the future, by building optimism and support structures, by utilising strengths and focusing on what's working well and much, much more, we can all enjoy higher levels of motivation, and accordingly, achieve more of our goals and live better lives."

Dr Sharp suggests that developing mindfulness is the first step you can take towards a healthier, happier and more optimistic life.

"Mindfulness has become a very trendy topic but, in fact, it has been around for thousands of years.

"It is simply about having insight or awareness of thoughts or habits."

This can allow you to change negative thoughts or habits into more positive

ones.

Take the first step towards greater awareness by setting a reminder for yourself three or four times a day – try a phone alarm – to stop and focus on what you are doing, what you are thinking and how you are feeling.

This might include eating habits, work practices or even obsessive thoughts.

"The next step is to learn to assess how useful all of those areas are to you," says Dr Sharp.

"You ask yourself, 'is this helping me' – and then you decide how to change it, even if that is changing your thinking about it."

➤ The third edition of Dr Sharp's bestseller *The Happiness Handbook* (Finch Publishing) has just been released. Find out more at [www.thehappinessinstitute.com](http://www.thehappinessinstitute.com) or follow Dr Sharp on Twitter: @Dr Happy.

## DID YOU KNOW

\$1 b

The amount Australians spend on back pain each year

## Diabetes relief with PBS drug

PEOPLE with Type 2 diabetes now have access to the first PBS listed once-a-day fixed-dose combination (FDC) of metformin XR (extended release) and a DPP-4 inhibitor for treatment of their disease.

Kombiglyze XR is a once-daily treatment, used to lower blood sugar levels in adults with Type 2 diabetes.

Professor Stephen Colagiuri, of Metabolic Health at the University of Sydney, said: "Fixed-dose combination therapies that allow once-a-day dosing provide another option for Type 2 diabetes patients" in addition to diet and exercise.

## BEAUTY PICK

POP STAR Gwen Stefani has teamed up with OPI to produce seven new glamorous nail polishes. Highlights from the collection include a bold red lacquer that pays homage to Gwen's signature lipstick, a new semi-matte satin finish in shades of gold and black, and a mirrored chrome paired with a special base coat. We like LoveAngelMusicBaby, \$19.95.



## INSOMNIA | People struggling to get a good night's rest

# Cash worries affecting sleep

MONEY worries and work concerns are causing Australians to lose almost 15 days of sleep each year, according to research by national mattress retailer Sleepy's.

Findings showed 70% of Australians lay awake worrying at night, with the average adult spending just under an hour fretting, equating to almost a full working day's worth of lost sleep each week.

Despite 31% of Australians saying they needed eight hours of sleep a night in order to function properly, 56% said night-time worrying was stop-

ping them from getting enough.

Financial woes were cited as the most common cause for concern, with 43% of respondents naming this as the culprit for their sleeplessness.

One in five said work stress kept them awake, while more than one in 10 blamed relationship problems.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, Sunday was identified as the worst night for getting much-needed shut eye, with many people dreading the thought of work the next day.

Anxiety was a common

cause of insomnia and could be exacerbated by a number of external factors.

A good mattress that supports your spine is essential for a comfortable night's sleep.

So too are drapes or window coverings that block out light, and bedding that ideally is natural and also suited to the climate – if you are too hot, or too cold, sleep will be disturbed.

Other sleep-disturbing habits include eating too close to bedtime, drinking alcohol, watching violent or action-style television, or worrying about work.



## Extra support for your back

BAD back? Body Bolster was developed with input from Australian physiotherapists to promote movement and support the back activity.

TGA-approved, it is versatile, effective and portable. It offers more than 40 individual exercise and activation options – each to provide support, correct posture, increase mobility and release muscle tension. \$79.90.

Stockist: <http://bodybolster.com>

