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How to get happy

What does it take to feel good?

25 ways to relax

Top tips for chilling out

Natural Highs

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Now sit back... and relax

Feeling frazzled? Prolonged stress can adversely affect all our bodily processes, causing numerous health problems. In 25 simple steps **Dawn Mellowship** shows you how relaxing is vital for health and wellbeing

1 Run a tepid bath and add seven drops of patchouli essential oil and two drops of ylang-ylang essential oil. Relax in the bath for 20 minutes to one hour, with your eyes closed, and focus on the feeling of your breath entering and exiting your nostrils.

2 You can do the following quick meditation anywhere. Breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth slowly and deeply. Focus on your heart area and visualise a time in your life when you were exquisitely happy. Hold onto that thought for five to 10 minutes.

3 Put on a relaxing classical CD (such as *Classical Chillout 2*), close your eyes and listen to the soothing sounds for 10-15 minutes.

4 Book yourself in for a relaxing holistic therapy, such as Reiki, shiatsu, reflexology, acupuncture, aromatherapy massage or floatation therapy, or learn a calming practice such as yoga, tai-chi or qi-gong.

5 Nourish your body with healthy foods. Eat plenty of fruits and vegetables (preferably organic) and essential fatty acids (found in foods such as fish oil, flaxseed oil, rapeseed oil, hemp oil and walnut oil) and be sure to get enough fibre into your diet from fruits, vegetables, legumes, grains, nuts, seeds and other sources.

6 Head out on a 20-30 minute stroll, taking in your surroundings and trying to remain in the moment.

7 Take up a relaxing hobby such as painting, cooking, pottery or golf. Hotcourses.co.uk provides a list of UK courses, including pottery and clay modelling, or if you fancy yourself as the next Jamie Oliver, [Ashburton Cookery School](http://AshburtonCookerySchool.co.uk) (www.ashburtoncookeryschool.co.uk) offers courses lasting from one day to four weeks.

8 Try this simple technique before you sleep at night. Breathe in and out slowly and deeply. Silently say to yourself as you inhale, "I am breathing in calm," and, as you exhale, "I am breathing out stress."

9 Stop trying to control life. Let go and be guided by your intuition and the universe. Say to yourself over and over again, "I let go to the will of the universe," and let life take you where you should be going, instead of trying to bend the world to your will.

10 Head out on a short trip alone or for ultimate indulgence head on a spa break – www.spa-quest.com lists a directory of spa venues around the world and www.shortholidaybreaks.com offer tailor-made trips to suit the individual traveller.

11 The scent of lavender is incredibly relaxing. Dab a tiny amount of lavender oil onto your wrists, temples and pillow.

12 Engross yourself in a good book or magazine for an hour or so.

13 On a sunny, warm day, head out on a picnic with a good friend. Take some healthy snacks and fresh fruit juices and have a good old chat.

"When there is a full moon, sit by the window for five to 10 minutes and focus on the moon, observing how it makes you feel"



14 Learn to say 'no' to others when you don't have the time to do something. Rather than trying to please other people all the time, focus on making yourself happy by trusting in your intuition.

15 Count your blessings. Allow your life experiences to make you a stronger, happier person by learning from them and appreciating how far you have come. Silently say to yourself 21 times each day, "I am grateful for all the lessons I have learned."

16 Snuggle up on the sofa with a duvet, watch a movie that makes you laugh and perhaps even indulge in some antioxidant-rich dark chocolate.

17 If you spend most of your working day slumped over a desk, remember to have a quick stretch, interlocking your fingers and pushing your arms up in the air for 15-30 seconds and closing your eyes.

18 Letting go with laughter is a great way to relax. Invite a few good friends around for some light-hearted conversation, or pay a visit to a comedy venue and have a good chuckle.

19 Sleep is essential. While we sleep and when in a deep state of relaxation our bodies produce more melatonin, a vital hormone produced in the brain by the pineal gland, which helps initiate healing and repair of the body and acts as an antioxidant.

20 Drink several cups of decaffeinated green tea everyday. It contains an amino acid called theanine, which has been shown to reduce stress, along with polyphenols, which have antioxidant properties and may reduce the risk of cardiovascular disease and cancer.

21 When there is a full moon, sit by the window for five to 10 minutes and focus on the moon, observing how it makes you feel.

22 Write down all your problems in a note-pad and tick them off one by one as they are solved, so you can see how much progress you are making and take a bit of pressure off yourself.

23 Exercise at least three times a week, in 30 to 60-minute bursts. Regular exercise can help maintain a healthy heart, control diabetes and obesity and foster a good night's sleep.

24 Visualise yourself floating in space with nothing but the stars and sky surrounding you and imagine a bright white light coming down through space, entering the top of your head and permeating your body for five to 15 minutes.

25 You cannot do everything at once. Deal with one problem at a time and give it your full attention before moving on to the next one, otherwise you'll end up with lots of half-solved problems and an abundance of stress.

Dawn Mellowship is an author, spiritual teacher, Reiki practitioner and teacher, ethical stylist and journalist. Her first book, *Passage to Freedom* (O Books, £9.99) is available from Amazon and all good book stores. Dawn's website can be found at www.dawnmellowship.com