

## Happiness Keeps You Young!

It is far too easy to get caught up in the rat race and spend all of your time running around without anything in front of you but the next immediate goal, but have you stopped and thought about how you really feel? When we stop and really consider what we feel like and what condition we are in, there is a good chance that we will realize that the all-important factor known as happiness is missing, or at least, not as high as it could be.

Many people will tell you that being happy is its own reward, but while this is certainly true, you'll find that being happy is also an integral part having a younger heart, better-functioning arteries, and living in a body that younger than what it should be, given the years that you have spent alive. You'll find that being happy and having a positive outlook can help you in ways that are as varied as lowering your blood pressure, helping you deal with pain, and seeing you to a quicker recovery after injuries and surgery. At the end of the day, it has been proven that happier people have a greater life expectancy than unhappy people, and they will often have a better time living it, as well!

It should come as no surprise to you that people who are happy and optimistic about their health will take better care of themselves. Because they tend to be more active, they will take preventative behaviors like wearing sunscreen, in addition to committing to more exercise and going in for checkups more regularly.

So the question becomes: how happy are you? The answer will vary, depending on what situation you find yourself in, but if you've read this far, you have an interest in improving your level of happiness. The truth is, the first and best thing that you can do is to start thinking about what makes you happy. The answer will change from person to person, and the truth is, happiness is less about having the latest electronics or finally going on that trip that you've wanted to go on; it's more a state of mind and an acceptance of things as they are.

For many people, genes play a part in what makes people happy. You'll find that if your parents were cheerful, that you'll have a greater skill set available for being happy than other people. However, simply by having a genetic predisposition to happiness is no guarantee that you will be happy, just like gloomy people can still learn to cheer up, regardless of what their life can be like. You can start by focusing on the positive and looking to see what you can change; more than that, you can start trying to believe that you really can effect a change, even in a small way.

Work in improving your happiness, both in the long term and the short term. While short term goals will give us instant gratification, make sure that you have some long term goals to strive for. Remember that sometimes, it's less about the achievement at the end, than the striving that goes on trying to get there!