

Things to do.

Relevant to: Depression:  Anxiety:  Irritability/Anger:  General emotional control: 

Doing the right thing at the right time is one of the big secrets of happiness. Some people are good at knowing what they want to do, but most of us benefit a lot from having a 'menu'. So here is such a menu, divided into headings just as a real menu would be. It is quite comprehensive, but you may wish to add things to it, cross others out, and 'adjust' others to suit you.

Entertainment.

Note: Research suggests that activities that totally engross and absorb us (whether work or recreation) make us happier long-term than activities that are simply 'entertaining' or 'fun' (although they are good too!).

- Watch a movie on TV.
- Watch a documentary on TV.
- Watch a 'show' (e.g. Strictly Come Dancing, Britain's Got Talent, etc) on TV.
- Watch a comedy.
- Listen to something informative on the radio.
- Listen to something light on the radio.
- Listen to some music.
- Choose a film to watch.
- Go to the cinema or theatre.
- Play a computer game.
- Go to a club.
- Go to a sports event.
- Browse the Internet, Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.
- Read a book/Kindle.
- Read a magazine.
- Read a newspaper.
- Do some handy craft.
- Prepare a nice meal.
- Do some painting.
- Do a jigsaw.
- Do another hobby.



Exercise and Biological.

- Go for a walk.
- Do stretches.
- Go for a run.
- Go to the gym.
- Go swimming.
- Play football / basketball / baseball.
- Rowing, real or on machine.
- Enjoy intimate physical contact.
- Do some housework.
- Do some gardening.
- Wash the car.
- Have a short sleep.
- Practice dancing.



Soothing activities.

- Soak in the bath.
- Deliberately relax – do a relaxation exercise.
- Practice singing.
- Play the piano or other musical instrument.
- Eat a healthy meal.
- Go and walk around town.
- Go for a walk in the country.
- Write your diary.

Chores.

(Note: especially if you absorb yourself in them, these can also be enjoyable, at the right time!)

- Do some tidying.
- Do some cleaning.
- Get rid of old stuff.
- Repair something.
- Sort out the finances.
- Do some work.



Mental activities.

Note: research suggests that we're happiest if we maintain moderately positive memories of our childhood. If your childhood was an unhappy one, then it is difficult to recollect the few positive experiences, but maybe it's worth working at it.

- Plan my career or my future.
- Daydream my career or future.
- Daydream about good things from the past.
- What do you enjoy thinking about – think about that.
- Plan out tomorrow.
- Think about something you are looking forward to.
- Do a crossword or Sudoku.
- Watch an educational programme.
- Study.
- Read a newspaper.



Do something for others

- Help somebody with their gardening.
- Help somebody with their decorating.
- Do some shopping for somebody who needs it.
- Visit somebody who is in trouble or lonely.
- Do some organised charity work.
- Get in touch with somebody.
- Phone a friend.
- Phone a relative.
- Phone a work colleague or former work colleague.
- Phone a neighbour.
- Visit any of the above.
- Text or email any of the above.
- Write a letter to any of the above.
- Buy a present for somebody else.



Other.

- Buy something from a shop.
- Buy something from the Internet.
- Rearrange some furniture.
- Go for a ride in the car, on the bike, or on a motorbike.

