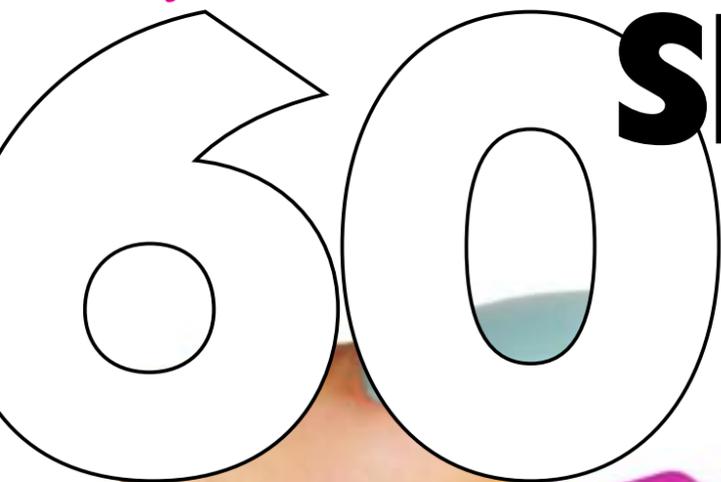


Fix a bad mood in SECONDS



"Hang on... This isn't my stress ball!"

Don't let a bad mood bring you down! Try these handy tricks and say bye to blah for good...

a bad mood might feel impossible to break, but did you know we actually control at least 40 per cent of our happiness levels? According to research by US psychology professors Kennon Sheldon and Sonja Lyubomirsky, a whopping 40 per cent of our happiness comes directly from the things we do – the other 60 per cent is a combination of genetics and life circumstances. We know there's not much you can do about genes or the challenges that life sometimes throws at you, but when it comes to the way you spend your time, well, that's completely up to you! So whether you've got a spare minute or a whole day, try these proven mood-boosters to feel totally fab, fast.

Got one minute?	Got five minutes?	Got 15 minutes?	Got an hour?	Got a day?
<p>★ GRIN TO WIN Force yourself to smile and your mood will improve. "Research shows that controlling the face can help to control the mind," says Domonique Bertolucci, author of <i>Your Best Life</i>.</p> <p>★ CODE IT Change your online passwords to a word that makes you happy. "I always choose fun words," says Kim, 26. "Every time I type those words in, I think of nice things."</p> <p>★ GET A RUSH "Do handstands with a friend or against a wall," says yoga teacher Angel Singmin. "Going upside down gives a rush of oxygen to the brain to make you more alert."</p> <p>★ DRINK WATER "Dehydration is one of the most common reasons people feel tired," explains Susie Burrell, author of <i>Losing the Last 5kg</i>.</p> <p>★ ADMIT YOU FEEL CRAP "Studies have shown that when subjects were asked to name the emotion they were having, their brains relaxed the associated chemical response," says clinical psychologist Louise Adams.</p>	<p>★ HAVE FUN IN THE SUN If you're low in vitamin D, you might feel tired and sluggish. Aim for two to 14 minutes in the sun, before 10am or after 3pm, three to four times per week.</p> <p>★ NAIL THAT ZEN Get a shakti mat (shaktimat.com.au). "It's like a bed of nails that stimulates your nerve endings and boosts your circulation. It's super relaxing once you get used to it," says Singmin.</p> <p>★ HAVE A NATURAL CHOCOLATE HIT Mix cacao powder, found in healthfood stores, with warm milk. "It's one of the best food sources of muscle-relaxing, stress-relieving magnesium," says naturopath Andrea Hepner. "Cacao has been shown to increase the brain chemical phenylethylamine, which is the chemical that's released when you're in love."</p> <p>★ GET SOME GOOD NEWS Forget the problems of the world – head to goodmood-news.com for some warm fuzzies.</p>	<p>★ BE A LONER "As little as 15 minutes of silence can be incredibly recharging and give a big boost to your mood," says Bertolucci. "You don't have to meditate, just look out the window with a cup of tea."</p> <p>★ GO ROLLER-BLADING "This is fast and exhilarating," explains accredited exercise physiologist Rebecca Sealey. "It will release endorphins that promote a sense of wellbeing and decrease pain sensation."</p> <p>★ MAKE BIG PLANS "If I've got a spare 15 minutes, I'll jump online and research my upcoming trip to Canada," says <i>Cosmo</i> reader Jess, 25. "Just looking at the photos and places I'm going to go makes me so excited."</p> <p>★ EXPRESS GRATITUDE Write down three things that you're grateful for. "Gratitude is often referred to as the shortcut to happiness – the more grateful you are, the happier you feel," says Robert Holden, author of <i>Be Happy</i>.</p>	<p>★ SHARE YOUR PROBLEMS WITH OTHERS Blogger Jessica Ainscough says that writing about her cancer fight keeps her positive. "I can vent about whatever I'm going through and connect with people all over the world who are dealing with similar issues," she says. "Plus, I get an instant mood-lift reading the comments people leave on my posts every day."</p> <p>★ SPLASH ABOUT FOR A WHILE "I do water aerobics," says <i>Cosmo</i> reader Georgia, 26. "I'm terrible at it, but I enjoy floundering around in the water, snorting with laughter with all the old nannas," she laughs.</p> <p>★ DRIVE YOUR MAN TOTALLY WILD "Give an erotic massage and take time to turn him on," recommends sexologist Tanya Koens. "Taking an hour out of your day can lead to a blissed-out sex experience and keep the worries of the day at bay." Sounds easy enough to us!</p>	<p>★ HANG WITH HAPPY PEOPLE Not only is positivity contagious among groups, but friends of friends can impact your mood, say researchers at Harvard and the University of California, San Diego. They followed 4739 people for 20 years and discovered an individual's happiness can actually spread three degrees.</p> <p>★ LEAVE THE HOUSE Whether you head to the movies or to your friend's place, it's crucial you resist the temptation to withdraw from the world. "Doing something makes you less likely to engage with negative thinking patterns," says Adams. "You'll teach yourself to cope with a down day in an effective way."</p> <p>★ UPDATE YOUR WARDROBE Take anything you never wear to Vinnies and box your summer clothes until the weather warms up. "Clutter prevents energy from flowing freely, so clearing out will make you feel liberated," says feng shui consultant Jane Langof. Kimberly Gillan □</p>

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