

# Asset HealthTalk

Keeping your health and wellbeing in the know



## Spring Into a Happier Life With Nine Simple Steps

**1** Talk about something worthwhile. According to a recent study, engaging in small talk was connected with unhappiness, while deep, meaningful discussions were linked to happiness. So be yourself, be real and you just might be surprised with the kind of conversations you have.

**2** Have true friends to discuss real life issues with. When a person has multiple people with whom they can relate and be themselves around, they are 60 percent more likely to experience happiness, says another recent study. Having a friend you can call up when times are tough is often more important than one who only wants to stick around for the good times.

"Five Science-Backed Strategies for More Happiness," Kira M. Newman, [greatergood.berkeley.edu](http://greatergood.berkeley.edu), March 16, 2016.  
"The Secrets to a Happy Life, From a Harvard Study," Anahad O'Connor, [well.blogs.nytimes.com](http://well.blogs.nytimes.com), March 23, 2016.

**3** Do something you love every day. Spending time doing the things you enjoy the most is good for you! Just 15 to 20 minutes of "me time" each day can help to make life a happier experience.

**4** Keep a journal. Write down your dreams and aspirations, visualize them coming true. Think about how you would accomplish your goals and make an action plan. Writing can be very therapeutic and can help to organize your thought processes.

**5** Spread your social butterfly wings and soar. Time and again, studies have shown those who join groups feel happier, more connected, less lonely and maintain stable relationships. So whether you join a walking club or a local soccer team – group participation may improve your mood.

**6** Hold yourself accountable. If you have goals, figure out how you're going to make them happen and go after them! Studies have shown that people who set both short-term and long-term goals are happier than those who don't.

**7** Choose positivity. Happiness is a choice. There are always at least two ways to view any situation, and if positivity is your frame of mind, life will be much more enjoyable.

**8** Anticipate happiness. Having occasions to look forward to, such as a fun concert, a night out with a friend or a weekend getaway, is key to maintaining a happy life.

**9** Be happy not being happy. It's OK to not be happy 100 percent of the time. Being constantly happy is not natural – life ebbs and flows. Try to be more at peace with the tough moments in life, and realize they pass.



Photographed: The Asset Health Team with family and friends at the 2015 Detroit Mustache Dache to support men's health.

### { How to Find a Fitness Event That's a Perfect Fit }

Races aren't only for elite athletes; anyone can participate. Registration for many summer events opens in the spring, and popular races tend to sell out quickly. The excitement of the crowds, getting out of your comfort zone and overcoming challenges can all have an inspiring impact on your fitness journey. Once you sign up, you're more likely to follow through with your goal. It's also a great way to travel. You can plan a trip around an event at a spot you want to visit. Or, you can participate in a race that supports a cause you're passionate about.

### { Tips for Getting Started }

**Explore your options** — 5K walks/runs, obstacle courses, bike races, triathlons (of varying lengths) and full or half marathons. Active.com is a great resource for finding events in your desired location.

**Decide if you want to participate in a fundraising event.** Some races require a minimum fundraising amount to join; this adds an extra time commitment leading up to the event.

**Keep your current fitness level in mind.** Choose an event that's realistic, but will push you to new heights. If you don't currently exercise, your first race probably shouldn't be a marathon.

**Recruit a friend.** It's fun having a friend to participate with, plus it's nice to have a training buddy. Or you can find a training group in your community.

**Schedule training workouts.** This will help ensure you're prepared for the big event. Many free training resources are available online.

"How to Find a Fitness Event That's Right for You," American Institute for Cancer Research Staff, [aicr.org](http://aicr.org), March 2, 2016.



# Forgiveness

## Can Be a Great Stress Buster

Did you know that continually nurturing grudges and negative feelings of resentment can keep your stress levels high and come at an emotional and physiological cost like premature death? All it takes to bring those stress levels down is forgiveness.

Forgiveness is a simple practice that can provide you with some of the same health benefits as yoga or meditation. Years of research have connected the regular practice of forgiving those who've wronged us with less psychological stress and countless other health benefits, such as a boost in overall heart health, improved physical ability, and even a longer life.

Research suggests that forgiveness works in two key ways: it helps us let go emotionally and physically. Forgiveness also lets us recover from the physical and emotional hangover, which is long-term stress.

When you forgive someone, you choose to give up your desire for revenge and feelings of resentment, you stop judging the person who hurt you, and you show generosity, compassion and kindness. When you forgive someone, you don't necessarily forget that the offense occurred or excuse it, but instead, you substitute the negative with positive feelings, thoughts and behavior.

Forgiveness offers us a chance at letting go of both emotional and physical burdens. So try it out yourself in honor of Stress Awareness Month, and your mind and body — not to mention the person you're forgiving — will probably thank you.

*"There's a Counterintuitive Way to Relieve Stress — and It's Way Easier than Meditating," Erin Brodwin, [businessinsider.com](http://businessinsider.com), March 1, 2016.*

*"Live Longer by Practicing Forgiveness," Susan Krauss Whitbourne Ph.D., [psychologytoday.com](http://psychologytoday.com), Jan. 1, 2013."*

# RE-THINK Your Reflux RELIEF

Acid reflux, sometimes referred to as heartburn, can be a common post-meal nuisance that happens when acid from your stomach splashes up into your esophagus, where it doesn't belong. Since stomach acid is designed to break down food, it can really irritate the lining of your esophagus – talk about painful!

There are several prescription and over-the-counter medications to manage heartburn, but here are a few alternative methods to explore:



### CHEW (SUGAR-FREE) GUM.

Chewing gum stimulates the production of saliva causing you to swallow more frequently, which helps remove digestive acid from your esophagus. Choose sugar-free gum to safeguard your teeth.



### ELEVATE YOUR BED (NOT YOUR PILLOW) 4 TO 6 INCHES.

Elevating the head of your bed with blocks can help keep stomach acid where it belongs – in your stomach.



### TRY A NEW RELAXATION TECHNIQUE.

Stress heightens symptoms of gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD, or chronic acid reflux). Explore a new relaxation method, such as bedtime yoga, tai chi, deep breathing exercises or listening to calming music.



### CONSIDER LIFESTYLE CHANGES.

Smoking cessation, weight loss, smaller meals, low-fat diets and consuming fewer provoking foods, such as alcohol, caffeine, garlic, onions or tomatoes, can help alleviate heartburn.

*"GERD: Lifestyle and Home Remedies," Mayo Clinic Staff, [mayoclinic.org](http://mayoclinic.org), July 31, 2014.*

*"Natural Home Remedies for Heartburn," WebMD Staff, [webmd.com](http://webmd.com), accessed on March 7, 2016.*