



# Feel good factors

Simple pleasures can often be the best

**W**ho says you need money to make you happy?

Experts now believe it's life's simple pleasures that bring contentment and joy.

**1** Laughter really is the best medicine! It reduces the levels of stress hormones and increases the levels of health-enhancing hormones. It increases the number of antibody-producing cells, which strengthens the immune system, provides a physical and emotional release, exercises the diaphragm, contracts the abs and even gives the shoulders a workout. And it feels great! Locate your nearest comedy club or try a laughter yoga class and do the splits with giggles!

**2** Eat protein at every meal as it keeps blood sugar levels stable and that means it will keep mood, energy levels and stress levels stable too. For best sources, choose low fat dairy products like yoghurt and milk, nuts, seeds, chickpeas and lentils, eggs, chicken, fish and lean red meats.

**3** Research from Harvard Medical School says that fresh flowers will lift your mood, decrease anxiety and can give you more energy and enthusiasm. Don't wait for someone else to buy them for you, because while flowers are a lovely gift from another, sometimes it's even nicer to treat yourself!

**4** Meditation isn't just for Buddhists and hippies. It can alleviate symptoms of PMT, improve the immune system, help post-operative healing, reduce emotional distress, help build self-confidence, increase serotonin production and decreases muscle tension and

headaches. Check out [www.arobuddhism.org/meditation](http://www.arobuddhism.org/meditation) for a free online course in meditation.

**5** No matter how busy you may be, take 10 minutes out of your working day for a stroll in the sunshine. The combination of walking and sunshine helps create "tryptamines", natural opiates that lift your spirits and clear your mind. You'll return happier, less stressed and more focused.

**6** A good night's sleep leaves you feeling refreshed and fighting fit to face the day. If you have trouble sleeping, sip a warm caffeine-free milky drink before bed and spray your pillow with lavender. An Ayurvedic Shirodhara spa treatment is also a sure way to ease troubled sleepers into slumber. A constant stream of milky oil is trickled over the forehead to clear the mind and promote deep relaxation. Take a look at [www.tamaraspa.co.nz](http://www.tamaraspa.co.nz) for more details. Shirodhara treatments can also be found at most Ayurvedic spas around New Zealand.

**'Take 10 minutes out of your working day for a stroll'**

