

Natural Highs:

40 Natural Ways to Lift Your Mood, Increase Your Energy Levels and Alter Your State



It absolutely is possible to influence your “state”. By state, I mean you can influence your mood, your energy levels and your state of mind. When you are in your optimum state, the world is your oyster, you perceive more possibilities and feel more capable, and you are usually better able to access joy!

Here are 40 really simple and easy to implement ways to improve your state. A healthy mind and mental state needs to be nurtured. If taken for granted or neglected it can quickly deteriorate. If you have mental illness, like any disease, recovery and feeling well require consistent daily management; there is no “quick fix”. Try some of these everyday, you will be better for it.

Eat your way to a higher state:

Diet has been scientifically proven to influence mood, performance, brain chemistry, your health and your overall state of well-being. To get yourself into an optimum state and play at the top of your game... it's a good idea to start with the basics.

1. Eat three servings a day of **top-quality protein** foods like fish, lean white meat (free range), egg, soya, quinoa, combinations of beans, lentils, pulses, and sprouts. This will make sure you are getting all the essential amino acids you need for optimum brain chemistry.
2. **Choose low GL carbohydrates.**

Eat reasonable portions of carbohydrates as whole grains, vegetables and fresh fruit, and stay away from processed sugar and refined foods. This will make sure you have a steady stream of good quality calming carbohydrates as well as essential amino acids entering your system which are vital for



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maintaining the perfect state of being. Your brain, your nerves, your red blood cells and your muscles all rely on carbohydrates for energy. Give them the fuel they need to perform. By choosing quality carbs you help keep this supply stable and avoid highs and lows that negatively affect mood, energy and other body systems.

This means you won't become a victim of cravings and addicted to stimulants that will make you edgy and weak.

3. **Combine protein with carbohydrate.** This is a very effective strategy to help keep your blood sugar levels stable which has a profound effect on your mood and ability to concentrate.
4. **Save your antioxidants for your power not for your defence.** Avoid hydrogenated fats (in foods like biscuits and margarines) and reduce your intake of saturated fats from meat, dairy produce and junk food. Avoid artificial additives and preservatives. They can deplete you of nutrients, damage your cells, steal your good mood and negatively affect your state.
5. Boost your **essential oils status.** Omega 3 fats contain EPA and DHA which are mood enhancers as well as mind and memory boosters. Eat good quality oily fish three times a week instead of meat, or take fish oil supplements. Have a tablespoon of ground seeds every day. Use cold-pressed seed oils in salad dressings. (Sources of oily fish include: sardines, mackerel, salmon, tuna. Sardines are best because they haven't accumulated harmful mercury.)
6. Drink 1 – 2 litres of **water** a day (naturally caffeine free herbal teas can be included in this.) Dehydration will affect your performance and concentration whereas enough water will keep you clear, alert and energised. Some herbal teas, have the added benefit of being a "pick up" or "calmer" so choose the one you need. For example: Peppermint and Liquorice tea are great for afternoon energizers. Camomile is great for relaxing. Lemon and Ginger are great for after meals and Jasmine is the perfect social tea.
7. Enjoy **whole and fresh natural foods** for greater vitality, energy and zest for life. Real foods contain many more vitamins and



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minerals and goodies than we could easily name off the top of our heads.

If your brain and your body is well nourished, you feel well and capable. If you are malnourished, lethargic, or carrying a burden of chemical toxins (like preservatives, trans-fats, and artificial additives) it is really difficult to improve your state because you just don't feel good and healthy.

8. Have a tablespoon of **lecithin** every day. Lecithin supports acetylcholine a neurotransmitter involved in memory and mood.
9. One or two squares of **raw dark chocolate** (or good quality organic dark chocolate) can be wonderfully calming and uplifting, especially if eaten with a handful of almonds. Almonds are great for the amygdala, the emotional centre of your brain.
10. Chop some **fresh herbs** onto your meal.

Patrick Holford, founder of Institute of Optimum Nutrition promotes the benefits of these culinary herbs. Basil can sharpen the senses and improve concentration. Coriander is reputed to have a refreshing, stimulating and uplifting effect on the mind and may help with lethargy and tension. Marjoram is helpful for calming the nervous system and reducing anxiety and feelings of stress. Peppermint is a cooling herb that can reduce angry feelings and nervousness. It can also help with mental fatigue. Rosemary is a stimulating herb, reputedly good for improving the memory. So plant a herb garden and get in the habit of sprinkling some fresh and revitalising goodness onto at least one meal a day.




11. Use **spices** like cinnamon or foods like ginger and liquorice to warm you up or uplift you. Cinnamon can also help to regulate blood sugar levels, helping to keep your mood stable.



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Key Nutrients: Support your Lifestyle with Supplements if you need to:

If you are malnourished or deficient in certain nutrients, this can cost you your sanity and definitely affect your state. While not always necessary, for some taking the right supplements can really give you the kick-start you need!

12. **A good quality multivitamin, mineral and antioxidant complex** can lift you up just by correcting deficiencies and making sure the basics are covered. This is particularly important for people who travel a lot or are eating a lot of processed food, or food on the go like in hotels, or on aeroplanes (e.g. business travellers).
13. **Vitamin C** (1-3 g per day) can help your body to cope with stress and keep your mind alert. Stress, smoking and drinking alcohol can deplete your body of vitamin C. If you are malnourished or have a compromised immune system you will battle to achieve your optimum state. Vitamin C is a water-soluble vitamin and isn't "stored" by body so we need to be making sure we get enough on a daily basis.
14. **Magnesium** can help calm anxiety and relieve tension by relaxing your muscles. If you battle to sleep, this will dramatically affect your state when you are awake. Try taking 300 mg of Magnesium in the evening before bed to help you relax. Or you could add some magnesium salts to a nice warm relaxing bath.
15. If your energy levels are low and your stress levels are high and you are relying on stimulants to get through your day, consider taking a vitamin **B complex after breakfast or at lunch time**, rather than a coffee or other stimulant like sugar. You will be delighted by the lift (and don't be put off by your bright yellow wee!) 
16. Consider supplementing **amino acids** if you have problems managing your mood or you are prone to addiction, anxiety or depression. Glutamine, tryptophan, tyrosine can all help to balance key neurotransmitters. (This should be done under guidance by a



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qualified health professional. Feel free to contact us for information or professional advice on this subject).

17. **Herbs** like Passionflower, camomile, St Johns Wort and Kava can be used to have a calming influence on your mood, but it is a good idea to get advice before using these. (Kava is banned in some countries.)
18. **Vegans** might benefit from supplementing vitamin B12 sublingually (under the tongue) and Spirulina. Vegans are often low in B12 and iron. Even if you are not vegan, if you are struggling with unexplained low energy and mood, get your iron and B12 checked, in case you are deficient.
19. **Omega 3** is a great anti-inflammatory essential fatty acid. Many people with depression, anxiety, memory problems may benefit from supplementing omega 3s. Omega 3 in the diet has been linked with increased intelligence and improved mood and behaviour, for kids and adults.



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Train your mind:

20. Focus your attention.



Choose where you focus your attention, be aware of what you give power and energy to. If you can laser tune your focus, you will elevate your state and achieve greater results. Focus on positives, notice when you are in a repetitive cycle of focusing on the negative or worst case scenario. We can train ourselves to pay attention to different things and to become aware of positive things at play in our lives. Our state and progress can be affected by focus. Choose what you would like to pull into your focus.

21. Balance your brain with meditation. The starting point for

meditation involves focusing your thoughts on one object, for example your breathing or repeating a mantra in your head or in some cases: focusing on a sacred word e.g. God. This focusing and balancing of the brain often has the effect of what many people experience as a sensation as if everything in your life just clicks into place or a stillness and silence where everything goes quiet and the world seems to stop. This is when you successfully tap into what is known as "alpha" or even "theta" states.

"In this state, instead of being blindly limited to viewing life as a 'struggle' or 'survival of the fittest', we can awaken to the oneness, the connectedness, the play of life. This is the true goal of meditation and the ultimate natural high."
Patrick Holford

22. Be aware of your internal dialogue. Do you have ANTs walking through your brain? Automatic Negative Thoughts are like little termites they gnaw and chew away at your happiness and perspective. Speak out supportive encouraging words to yourself. Be positively suggestive to yourself, and use words and visualisation to imagine the outcomes and successes you hope for.



23. Be Still! Stop and listen. When you are feeling overwhelmed or stressed, stop for a second and be present. Worry is in the future, it is an anticipation of a situation you fear might hurt or



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harm you or that you won't be able to overcome or handle. Take a moment to distract yourself from that fear and those thoughts and bring your consciousness back to the now. In the present you will be able to hear different sounds and smell different things... close your eyes and identify as many as you can, while taking a few deep relaxing breaths. This can have an amazing calming effect and help you to regain control of your senses readying you for action.

24. **Reframe** limiting beliefs and surrender unsupportive thought patterns. Remove negative anchors to supportive tasks, people and places such as "work out at the gym" or "paperwork or healthy food doesn't taste good", "I hate prospecting" and find other ways to think about these things in a positive light or through the benefits they bring to you. In the same way remove positive anchors from unsupportive tasks, people and places such as "smoke break" or "Ice-cream makes me happy". Try to reverse these and attach the negative anchor to unsupportive tasks. Another useful reframe is with regards to your internal dialogue and the language you use, for example ban "should" from your vocabulary and replace it with: "Imagine if I did...", "I would like to", "I will do...", "I want to...", "I will benefit from..." Notice the difference in how you feel about the same activities.

"Burn the thoughts, beliefs and attitudes of the happiest, most effective people into your mind and you will feel how they feel, do what they do and get the same results they get..." Mike Brescia

25. When you make a mistake or something goes wrong, rather than blowing up the mistake, delay or setback, take a moment to gain a proper perspective. Is it really the end of the world? Ask yourself what the learning or valuable lesson has come out of the event. Then ask yourself where the opportunity or victory is in it. If you can't turn it into a positive, at least let it go. Holding onto it or beating yourself up will keep you in a losing disempowered state. Learn the lesson and move on.
26. Choose your circle of influence carefully. Your "unconscious" mind is open to suggestion, make sure that those speaking into it or influencing it are mostly positive and supporting, enrich your perspective or lighten your state and your mood, or create an environment where you feel loved, accepted and like you belong. A sense of community, connectedness and belonging will also increase



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neurotransmitters like Serotonin and Gaba which help us feel calm and stable, even happy.

Involve your Senses and Enjoy your Body

27. **Get Wet! Water is invigorating.**

Have an energising shower, a cool splash in the ocean or a relaxing bath with lavender or orange oil in it or bergamot or geranium for a mood lift. Water has long been associated with healing, calming and energising and new research supports its role in supporting a healthy mind and state.



28. **Movement through light exercise or some aerobic exercise can get that vital energy going.**

It will invigorate your brain, raise endorphins and as an added bonus, burn some fat. Exercise has been proven to help people recover from depression. Dancing has been associated with elevated mood, decreased incidence of Alzheimer's and improved mental health. Walking in nature releases Gaba, a stabilising calming neurotransmitter.

29. **Sunlight.** Maximise natural light in your room, with natural daylight or full spectrum lighting. Sunlight and vitamin D are important for the pineal gland, for hormone regulation, for your immune system and can ward off depression. Sit out in the morning sun or afternoon sun for 20 minutes a day, face and arms exposed to the rays (and of course keep out of the mid day sun, so that you don't get sun burned).

30. **Moderate your body's temperature.** Getting too cold or too hot can affect your mood and make you irritable and decrease your performance. Be sure to create a comfortable environment for yourself to be in. Fresh crisp air can be invigorating, sitting by a sparkling log fire can be energising and relaxing at the same time. Make yourself comfortable. If you get hot, take a cool shower. Keep your bedding appropriate to the weather or your room temperature.

31. **Intimacy, physical touch and love making!** Love making (and satisfying sexual interactions) inject a chemical cocktail of feel good chemicals, hormones and endorphins, into your body. When we



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orgasm or are touched by someone we love, we our levels of oxytocin rise, making us feel calm, loved, reassured. All of these will have a powerful influence on your mood, energy and your state.

32. **Massage.** The healing power of touch can be like medicine and can powerfully affect how you feel. Exchange massages or foot rubs with your partner, ask a friend to give you a head massage or book yourself into a massage parlour.



33. **Use colour to influence your mood.** Violet helps balance the mind, Magenta will invoke a sense of empowerment. Blue is a great calming agent, picture the ocean and the big blue sky as a powerful antidote to stressful situations. Turquoise refreshes and eases anxiety, orange is cheerful and relaxing at the same time. Red is energising, passion. White is a mood booster, connector and mind enhancer. Yellow is often associated with "happiness", sunshine, positivity and children.

34. **Smell is so powerful that it acts directly on the brain like a drug.** Our smell sense is directly wired into the limbic system, a part of our brain that acts as an emotional switchboard. Fragrances can relieve pain, call up deep-seated memories and generally affect personality and behaviour. Scents like essential oils: Ylang Ylang, Sandalwood, Rose, Patchouli, Jasmine, Vanilla and Musk are both relaxing and stimulating. You could burn these essential oils in an oil burner, add drops to your bath, or burn fragranced candles to help improve your state.

35. **Create a state of ecstasy or calm through music.** You can use music consciously to alter your state- as a natural stimulant, relaxant, mood booster and connector, both at home and at work. Music with 60 beats per minute aids concentration and puts you in a receptive and calming learning state.

'Half an hour of music produces the same effect as ten milligrams of Valium.'
Raymond Bahr,
Director of Coronary Care,
St Agnes Hospital

36. **Sleep.** Increased REM sleep is an excellent mood enhancer. Get enough sleep. People who are sleep deprived tend to be lower in



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serotonin, lower in growth hormone, less productive, feel more stressed and can be ineffective. Aim for 6 to 9 hours a night. Take siestas, a well timed nap can be tremendously invigorating!

37. **Spend more time on your passions**, doing what you love and love what you are doing! You will be more efficient, achieve more, feel more motivated and won't need to be as disciplined. Doing what you love puts you in a state of flow.

38. **Play! Laugh and have fun!**

Modern day life is full of obligations, and "rush". This can be stressful, it is important to make time for "slow" and "fun" too.



Schedule in time for "outcome-less activities" like reading a story (as opposed to a personal development or business book), go for a picnic, fall asleep in a hammock, go for a walk in a beautiful place, watch a movie, play a board game with your partner or some friends, play outside with your kids. Think of ways you can bring more "fun" into everyday life. And when there are chores to be done or you are trying to make improvements in your life, like changing habits, think of ways you can make these fun. Excitement raises dopamine, our motivating hormone.

39. **Be in Love and Gratitude.** If you can find reasons to love and you can be thankful, then you can lift your state and raise your potential. Love and Gratitude have high positive vibrations and they make you feel uplifted, elevated and like a winner. Master that art and capture that ideal state! It's the ultimate natural high!

40. **Allocate time and money to "experiences"** that enrich your life or connect you to others rather than just acquiring possessions. For example save up for a fun outing or an experience whether it is bungy jumping, an African safari, a trip to Paris, a massage or a rally car race or a day off out and about... even better if you can do it with a companion you care about. Studies suggest experiences will bring you more long-term joy than an object you buy like another pair of shoes, or another cushion for your bed, or just another outfit and an infinite list of possessions to buy and accumulate.

Please note this article is not meant to diagnose, prescribe or treat. It is meant for educational purposes only, as a light resource to support a healthy lifestyle. Please consult your health professional for advice or support if you are presenting with any illnesses or on medication before taking supplements.



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