

No Hreflang

# 10 happiness hacks to help you through lockdown



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Red 12 November 2020



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### From Red Online

The latest wave of [lockdown](#) restrictions are proving even more challenging for many of us. This time around we not only have the disruption of social distancing, but the added gloom of rainy days, dark evenings, political uncertainty and general emotional fatigue. At times like this it can be difficult to stay positive, so we asked 10 leading experts to give us their top tips for lockdown happiness.

#### 1. Get by with a little help from your furry friends

'Pets can be your best pill against loneliness with its devastating mental and physical health effects during lockdown! Their companionship combats loneliness, social isolation, and provides a clear daily structure and routine. Pets help against stress, depression, anxiety, and emotional pain through their calming and comforting effect. This results in lowered blood pressure, improved immune system, better sleep and mental health. They increase your happiness, improve your mood, and relax you through the release of "happy" and "love" hormones even after only five minutes of cuddling. They keep us grounded and give us hope and joy.'

Dr Margit Gabriele Muller, world-leading vet, NLP Master and author of [Your Pet your Pill](#).



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## 2. Stay connected

'Lockdown presents several challenges in our ability to stay connected. We need to keep social distance, we cannot visit as we used to, and the way we share experiences radically changed. As staying connected is incredibly important for our wellbeing, we need to be intentional about it and prioritise it. We need to be explicit in letting others know how important they are. Learn to maximise the ability to connect through an online platform or just using the phone to say: "I am thinking about you" or "how can I support you?" You can find creative ways to do things together, take a yoga class, watch a show, sing together etc. It is crucial to understand that connection is an emotional experience and not a geographical one.'

Dr Guy Lubitsh is a psychologist and co-author of [Connect: Resolve Conflict, Improve Communication, Strengthen Relationships](#).

## 3. Use this time to test exciting ideas

'Do you have an idea that you've never had the time to get off the ground? Whether you've been toying with starting a new business doing something you love, launching a community project or making a major life change, this could be the perfect time to put it to the test and find out whether it is worth going for. Don't just sit on your idea and wait for someone else to do it – this time could be used to start something new and exciting to focus on for 2021.'

Julia Shalet is an innovation expert and author of [The Really Good Idea Test](#).

## 4. Indulge in lockdown luxuries

'Numerous studies have showed that creativity and happiness are intrinsically linked. We're going to need all our creativity to work effectively and solve the new challenges we're faced with in lockdown, and it is when we're happy that our creative juices really flow. It is therefore important to not forget about the little rewards, or 'lockdown luxuries', throughout the day that make you happy. For me it starts with a stretch in the fresh air first thing, it is a coffee and a chat with the family in our 'Costa-kitchen' mid-morning, a brisk walk before the afternoon shift and a belly full of laughs watching Schitt's Creek at the end of the day. But everyone is different, so take some time to create your own daily happiness routine and all areas of your life will benefit.'

Mark Simmonds is a creativity expert and the founder of [GENIUS YOU](#).

## 5. Take life lessons from Netflix

'Beat lockdown blues through the life-changing power of film. Whether it's an old classic like It's a Wonderful Life, a contemporary adventure like Eat Pray Love, an indie like Peaceful Warrior, or a documentary like Tony Robbins: I Am Not Your Guru, movies have the ability to make us forget our struggles and feel better about ourselves and our lives. For example, Nelson Mandela (Morgan Freeman) teaches us gratitude in Invictus, Erin Brockovich (Ellis, Julia Roberts) teaches us resilience in Erin Brockovich and Christopher Gardner (Will Smith) teaches how to achieve greater health, wealth and happiness in The Pursuit of Happyness.'

Dawud Abdul-Hamid Gurevitch, The Movie Mentor, is the author of [May The Source Be With You: A Filmic Guide To Change Your Life](#).



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## **6. Mix your body a chemical cocktail**

'All emotions are chemicals – strands of neuropeptides. Most people operate at the mercy of those chemicals without realising that they can strategically influence them with Physical Intelligence – the ability to detect and actively manage the balance of certain key chemicals through how we move, breathe, think and interact. Three “feel good” chemicals are key for mood: oxytocin (social bonding and trust), dopamine (pleasure and reward), and serotonin (happiness). Here are a few techniques that will help: Meditating and eating bananas or 70% dark chocolate boosts serotonin. Smiling at others, even through the camera lens of your computer/phone, boosts oxytocin. When people smile back, it boosts dopamine. Sending a text/calling someone to ask how they are doing/if you can help also boosts oxytocin. Their response boosts dopamine. Physical contact (even hugging yourself) and petting your pets boost oxytocin. Start mixing your mood-boosting chemical cocktail!'

Claire Dale is co-author of award-winning wellbeing book [Physical Intelligence](#).

## **7. Realise that it is ok to grieve**

'Whenever we suffer a loss, regardless of what that loss is – family, job, freedom, health etc. – we grieve. Don't be afraid to allow yourself to feel the pain of the loss and accept the feelings it brings. Often we are told to not to feel bad, but sadness like happiness needs to be felt. Process your thoughts so you can draw conclusions, accept and move forward. Life is inevitably interspersed with all sorts of experiences – good and bad – so don't take it personally and realise that each loss can be an opportunity for growth and learning. Stay open to change.'

Lianna Champ has over 40 years' experience in grief and bereavement counselling and is author of practical guide, [How to Grieve Like A Champ](#).



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### **8. Try 'radical empathy'**

'Radical empathy is the committed practise of considering the world through the context and reality of other people without judgement. When you see behaviour or hear views that jar, instead of getting angry or upset, take a moment to consider "what might have led them to this?" When we empathise we don't need to agree, we simply need to use our imagination to be curious and to try and understand their viewpoint. This builds our ability to empathise and it helps us understand why the other person feels the way they do. We can get closer to people without feeling 'judgy' and create happier, more positive relationships.'

Mimi Nicklin is a globally recognised millennial thought-leader and author of new book [Softening the Edge](#).



## **9. Start a hobby**

'Discovering a hobby that you love is a great way to incorporate some self-care and recharge into your lifestyle. Research shows that people with hobbies are less likely to suffer from stress, low mood, and depression. Finding time for self-care, especially during lockdown when our nervous systems are on high alert, is crucial. You can adopt a hobby that is useful to you, that helps you refine a skill or incorporate a new one into your lifestyle. Gathering supplies and going to multiple stores can be a hassle for your schedule and budget, so consider investing in a kit for your latest hobby. Kits for candle making, knitting, and even gardening are some of my favourites.'

Carina Lawson is a Time Management Coach and the Founder of [Ponderlily Planners & Journals](#).

## **10. Remember, this too will pass!**

'At difficult times, it is important practice gratitude – when we're grateful for what we DO have, we forget about what we don't have. Sometimes it is a question of identifying what you need to give up on or let go. You might find it helpful to ritualise the process of completion, so try saying to yourself - "I am complete!" But most of all, remember that, like all the challenges you have already been through and overcome in life, this too shall pass!'

Karlin Sloan is a global leadership & development coach, CEO of Sloan Group International and author of new book, [Inspiring Leadership for Uncertain Times](#).