



Love Your Life in 30 Seconds

■ **YEAP, SURE. ALLES RICHTIG WITH THE world in 30 seconds?** Even drugs don't work that fast. But scientists and economists have begun to study happiness in a rigorous way, and they're learning a few things about emotional elevation—including several proven ways to give yourself an instant mood lift without the guilt of a Godiva binge or shopping spree:

■ **Smile a good bit.** Seriously: Hearing someone else laugh triggers a response in areas of your brain related to smiling, according to research from University College, London.

■ **Put out a pinch of bliss.** A survey conducted by a British psychologist queried subjects about their mood before and after they ate chocolate, drank wine, listened to music, and gazed at photos of loved ones. Only the photos gave a noticeable lift—an 11 percent improvement.

■ **Be affectionate with your partner.** A study from the University of North Carolina found that women who got several hugs a day from their husbands had significantly lower blood pressure than those embraced less often. Another study using fMRIs showed women's brains to be far less reactive to the threat of mild electrical shock when holding a loved one's hand versus a stranger's.

■ **Ask an office mate how she's doing.** A recent study from Spain found that professional support—including a good relationship with co-workers—will help make your job far more satisfying and absorbing.

How to Get 7 More Hours into Your Day

■ **FOR THE OVERSCHEDULED, under-rested average American female, experts swear there are ways to make more time for yourself.**

■ **HANDLE THINGS ONCE (saves 15 to 20 minutes).** When it comes to e-mail, voice mail, or paperwork, take instant action—i.e., read, answer, delete, file—so you don't have to come back to it. The accumulated time saved can add up to ten hours a month, says Jana Kemp, a Boise, Idaho, "time architect" and the author of *No! How One Simple Word Can Transform Your Life*.

■ **DON'T LISTEN TO THE NEWS FIRST THING IN THE MORNING (30 minutes).** Depressing reports can distract you from efficiently accomplishing your A.M. routine—getting ready for work, feeding the kids, mentally preparing for a good day, says Los Angeles lifestyle coach Ruth Klein. If you really want to watch *Good Morning America*, TiVo it.

■ **MAKE GOOD USE OF WAITING TIME (30 minutes).** Don't go to the doctor without taking something to do—work papers to read, stamped notecards to catch up on correspondence—advises Laura Stack, author of *Find More Time*. Bring a book or magazine to the bank; pay bills while on hold with a credit card company.

■ **THINK "HALF-TIME" (30 minutes).** Arrange a carpool for your child's ballet class or soccer practice, Stack suggests (that way, you'll cut driving time by at least half). Wear a wireless headset so you can water plants or pick up toys as you talk on the phone. And, whether you're cooking chili or

baking cookies, make a double batch, freezing what you don't use.

■ **BE DECISIVE AND MOVE ON (up to 60 minutes).** Every minute spent waffling can slow down your ability to take action, says Kemp. For example, rather than spend six hours researching the best round-trip airfare deal—only to save \$25 in the end—give yourself 45 minutes to comparison price shop, then make a decision.

■ **LIGHTEN UP ON YOUR CLEANING STANDARDS (30 to 45 minutes).** Aiming for "dirt removal" versus "perfectly spotless" can free up a lot of time. "In my house, I wipe down the stall after showering instead of doing a big thorough scrub every week," says Stack. "Consider washable throw rugs rather than carpets that need constant steam-cleaning, and change the heating and cooling system filters quarterly to cut down on dust."

■ **WRITE IT DOWN (60 minutes).** Constantly cycling through a to-do list in your mind hinders productivity and creativity, says Klein. Carry a pad or BlackBerry and jot down what's got to get done, clearing your mind so you can come up with work solutions and new ideas more quickly.

■ **TURN OFF TECHNOLOGY DURING YOUR HIGH-ENERGY TIME (90 minutes).** Pinpoint the time of day when you are at your freshest, and remove all distractions, says Klein. For example, route all calls to voice mail and avoid your e-mail in-box. You'll be much more productive.

■ **MONITOR TIME-SAPPING ADDICTIONS (60 minutes).** According to the latest American Time Use Survey by the Bureau of Labor Statistics, in 2005 the average U.S. citizen watched 2.6 hours of television a day. "Reducing your television-watching time by five hours a week adds up to 11 extra days a year," says Stack, who also suggests setting a timer (no more than 60 minutes) for Internet surfing. —K.M.