

The bottom line is that when we're not feeling well we also often don't feel like doing anything. A simple fact is that getting out to do something often makes us feel a bit better. So we're in a catch 22 here. How do we get out to do anything if we don't have the motivation to do it. Ah ha! We often hold the common misconception that we need motivation in order to actually do something. The truth is, it is often the opposite. We have to do something, in order to get the engines moving to spark motivation. The first step is often the most difficult.

Just like our minds and bodies can work to spiral downwards when we're depressed, they can also work to spiral upwards. The trick here is to ask yourself, what do I feel like I actually can do in this moment. Maybe it's something small, and whatever you choose, scale it back a bit. For example, if you feel like you can go on a walk, ask yourself for how long. If 20 minutes pops up, plan on going for a 15 minute walk. The idea is not to push yourself and not to overdo it. If you push yourself and its too much, you'll get disappointed, then start think negative thoughts about the experience, which will turn to shame or guilt, and then to more lethargy. If you think you can go on a 20 minute walk and plan on 15, then you are likely to accomplish that. If you can accomplish that, then often times good thoughts and feelings will arise because you did it. Learning how to be present to the moment, or mindful, with your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations can help you better recognize these good feelings that may seem like distant strangers who have been gone for too long.

So how to do we do it? Often times when we're not feeling well, our brains don't seem to function and the first barrier is to actually think of something pleasurable to do. We'll bypass that hurdle by providing a list of 183 things that are possible to do as a pleasurable activity. Some of these will resonate with you while others will not. First, simply note the things on the list that have been pleasurable to you in the past or seem like they might be now. Second, choose which ones you think you are able to do. Third, whatever time frame you think you can do it for, scale it back (If 20 minutes, plan on 15). Fourth take that first step, knowing that it is the first step that gets the engines moving and later you may realize the motivation arise to do more, along with positive thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations. When these do arise, simply acknowledge them as they are, and let them be. No need to analyze them or figure them out, acknowledging them is enough. One last note, we have to apologize, we have lost track of where this list came from originally, so there is a reference to it.

- 1. Soaking in the bathtub
- 2. Planning my career
- 3. Collecting things (coins, shells, etc.)
- 4. Going for a holiday
- 5. Recycling old items
- 6. Relaxing
- 7. Going on a date
- 8. Going to a movie
- 9. Jogging, walking
- 10. Listening to music
- 11. Thinking I have done a full day's work
- 12. Recalling past parties
- 13. Buying household gadgets
- 14. Lying in the sun
- 15. Planning a career change
- 16. Laughing
- 17. Thinking about my past trips
- 18. Listening to others
- 19. Reading magazines or newspapers
- 20. Hobbies (stamp collecting, model building, etc.)
- 21. Spending an evening with good friends
- 22. Planning a day's activities
- 23. Meeting new people
- 24. Remembering beautiful scenery
- 25. Saving money
- 26. Gambling
- 27. Going to the gym, doing aerobics
- 28. Eating
- 29. Thinking how it will be when I finish school
- 30. Getting out of debt/paying debts
- 31. Practising karate, judo, yoga
- 32. Thinking about retirement
- 33. Repairing things around the house
- 34. Working on my car (bicycle)
- 35. Remembering the words and deeds of loving people
- 36. Wearing sexy clothes
- 37. Having quiet evenings
- 38. Taking care of my plants
- 39. Buying, selling stocks and shares
- 40. Going swimming
- 41. Doodling
- 42. Exercising
- 43. Collecting old things
- 44. Going to a party
- 45. Thinking about buying things
- 46. Playing golf
- 47. Playing soccer
- 48. Flying kites
- 49. Having discussions with friends
- 50. Having family get-togethers
- 51. Riding a motorbike

- 52. Sex
- 53. Playing squash
- 54. Going camping
- 55. Singing around the house
- 56. Arranging flowers
- 57. Going to church, praying
(practising religion)
- 58. Losing weight
- 59. Going to the beach
- 60. Thinking I'm an OK person
- 61. A day with nothing to do
- 62. Having class reunions
- 63. Going ice skating, roller
skating/blading
- 64. Going sailing
- 65. Travelling abroad, interstate or
within the state
- 66. Sketching, painting
- 67. Doing something spontaneously
- 68. Doing embroidery, cross stitching
- 69. Sleeping
- 70. Driving
- 71. Entertaining
- 72. Going to clubs (garden, sewing,
etc.)
- 73. Thinking about getting married
- 74. Going birdwatching
- 75. Singing with groups
- 76. Flirting
- 77. Playing musical instruments
- 78. Doing arts and crafts
- 79. Making a gift for someone
- 80. Buying CDs, tapes, records
- 81. Watching boxing, wrestling
- 82. Planning parties
- 83. Cooking, baking
- 84. Going hiking, bush walking
- 85. Writing books (poems, articles)
- 86. Sewing
- 87. Buying clothes
- 88. Working
- 89. Going out to dinner
- 90. Discussing books
- 91. Sightseeing
- 92. Gardening
- 93. Going to the beauty salon
- 94. Early morning coffee and
newspaper
- 95. Playing tennis
- 96. Kissing
- 97. Watching my children (play)
- 98. Thinking I have a lot more going
for me than most people
- 99. Going to plays and concerts
- 100. Daydreaming
- 101. Planning to go to TAFE or
university
- 102. Going for a drive

- 103. Listening to a stereo
- 104. Refinishing furniture
- 105. Watching videos or DVDs
- 106. Making lists of tasks
- 107. Going bike riding
- 108. Walks on the riverfront/foreshore
- 109. Buying gifts
- 110. Travelling to national parks
- 111. Completing a task
- 112. Thinking about my achievements
- 113. Going to a footy game (or rugby, soccer, basketball, etc.)
- 114. Eating gooey, fattening foods
- 115. Exchanging emails, chatting on the internet
- 116. Photography
- 117. Going fishing
- 118. Thinking about pleasant events
- 119. Staying on a diet
- 120. Star gazing
- 121. Flying a plane
- 122. Reading fiction
- 123. Acting
- 124. Being alone
- 125. Writing diary/journal entries or letters
- 126. Cleaning
- 127. Reading non-fiction
- 128. Taking children places
- 129. Dancing
- 130. Going on a picnic
- 131. Thinking "I did that pretty well" after doing something
- 132. Meditating
- 133. Playing volleyball
- 134. Having lunch with a friend
- 135. Going to the hills
- 136. Thinking about having a family
- 137. Thoughts about happy moments in my childhood
- 138. Splurging
- 139. Playing cards
- 140. Having a political discussion
- 141. Solving riddles mentally
- 142. Playing cricket
- 143. Seeing and/or showing photos or slides
- 144. Knitting/crocheting/quilting
- 145. Doing crossword puzzles
- 146. Shooting pool/Playing billiards
- 147. Dressing up and looking nice
- 148. Reflecting on how I've improved
- 149. Buying things for myself
- 150. Talking on the phone
- 151. Going to museums, art galleries
- 152. Thinking religious thoughts
- 153. Surfing the internet
- 154. Lighting candles

- 155. Listening to the radio
- 156. Going crabbing or prawning
- 157. Having coffee at a cafe
- 158. Getting/giving a massage
- 159. Saying "I love you"
- 160. Thinking about my good qualities
- 161. Buying books
- 162. Having a spa, or sauna
- 163. Going skiing
- 164. Going canoeing or white-water rafting
- 165. Going bowling
- 166. Doing woodworking
- 167. Fantasising about the future
- 168. Doing ballet, jazz/tap dancing
- 169. Debating
- 170. Playing computer games
- 171. Having an aquarium
- 172. Erotica (sex books, movies)
- 173. Going horseback riding
- 174. Going rock climbing
- 175. Thinking about becoming active in the community
- 176. Doing something new
- 177. Making jigsaw puzzles
- 178. Thinking I'm a person who can cope
- 179. Playing with my pets
- 180. Having a barbecue
- 181. Rearranging the furniture in my house
- 182. Buying new furniture
- 183. Going window shopping