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7 daily practices that lead to sustained happiness and good health, from 85-year Harvard study

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This story is part of CNBC Make It's Tools for Happiness series, which details what we learned from taking a free happiness course offered by Harvard University.

85 years ago, researchers at Harvard University started the [Study of Adult Development](#) to identify which lifestyle choices make people happy throughout their lives.



the Grant Study which followed
us years, according to the [site](#) that

happy-Well" and "Sad-Sick."

"The Grant study found that there are seven habits that result in individuals being happy and well in older age rather than ending up sad and sick," [Harvard's course about managing happiness](#) included in its coursework.

These are the behaviors that appear to lead to a happy and well-lived life, based on the study's findings.

7 practices that lead to happiness and good health

- 1. Not smoking**
- 2. Avoiding alcohol abuse**
- 3. Maintaining a healthy body weight**
- 4. Exercising daily**
- 5. Adopting an adaptive coping style:** "This means that you have good conflict-resolution practices," the Harvard course explained.
- 6. Fostering a growth mindset:** "Invest in education or the practices of lifelong learning," the course added.
- 7. Maintaining stable, long-term friendships and loving relationships**

Participants involved in the study complete questionnaires about aspects of their lives like mental health and marital quality every two years. They also submit health information every five years and are interviewed every five to 10 years "to document more in-depth information," according to the Harvard study's [site](#).

"Aging happy and well, instead of sad and sick, is at least under some personal control," Dr. George E. Vaillant, former director and one of the pioneers of the study, told the [Harvard Gazette](#) in 2001.

"We have considerable control over our weight, our exercise, our education, and our abuse of cigarettes and alcohol," Vaillant added, "With hard work and/or therapy, our relationships with our spouses and our coping styles can be changed for the better. A successful old age may lie not so much in our stars and genes as in ourselves."

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