

Happy Lawyer Happy Life

The Course Week Three



The first Habit of a Happy Lawyer-Health

Over the next five weeks we are going to look at the 5 key habits of 'happy lawyers'-

H- Health
A- Attitude
P- Passion
P-Purpose
Y-You

There is a good chance you will find that the happiness themes you came up with in week one will feature in these habits.

These 5 habits are not an exhaustive list but the more I have researched happiness, the more these 5 concepts kept coming up in one way or another.



It is for Health

This week, before going any further, you should read pages 69 to 94 of my book, Happy Lawyer Happy Life. As you read, you will probably be thinking, 'I know this already' and I expect you do- the problem is life starts to take over, we get busy, focus on everyone else and our own health is the first thing that goes.

When it comes to happiness, good health is absolutely essential. Without good health, we really cannot do anything. When I refer to 'health', I am referring to physical health, mental health and our overall wellness.

If you are not looking after yourself and making your health and wellness your top priority, you will struggle with stress. I expect you feel tired and run down most of the time and suffer from illnesses, such as colds and flus, with some regularity.

For me, any discussion about health and wellness begins with fuel, proceeds quickly to movement (code for exercise!) and ends with rest.

This week I really encourage you to think carefully about whether you are giving your own health the priority you should. I often use the saying 'You need to fit your own mask first'. If your health is lacking you will not be able to be the best version of yourself for your partner, family, friends, colleagues and clients. When our health is lacking, it can be hard to really see the impact it is having (unless you are really sick of course) but when you are exercising regularly, eating well and getting lots of sleep you will feel the energy in your body, in your mind and you will notice things that otherwise might have been difficult are suddenly so much easier.



How are you Fuelling your body & mind?

Health is my 'Number 1 Happiness Attribute' for a good reason – without our health, nothing else really matters. I want to live for as long as I can and, simply put, to give myself the best chance of achieving this, I need to be as healthy as I can be. This starts with eating really well- your fuel.

Food = Fuel = Performance

If you think about the brain science we read about last week, you will remember the strong connections between happiness and diet. When it comes to your 'fuel' let's start by rating your current 'fuel' on a scale-

1

2

3

4

5

A score of '1' would mean this is an area you want to work on- you are probably eating poorly- the wrong stuff- or not enough as time gets in the way. The 'wrong stuff' tends to fall in the processed food category- ie not food you are making from scratch yourself!

A score of '5' means you are all over this (ie our friend Justin who preps all his meals for the week on a Sunday!)

Somewhere in the middle might mean that there is room for some improvement!

Your 'Fuel' Challenges?

Most of us don't go deliberately out of our way to avoid eating well. Life as a lawyer is busy and draining, often involving stationary work, where having regular breaks is sometimes just not possible. Then add a few family commitments and it is easy to see why eating well falls by the wayside! So it may just be lack of time, or perhaps it is something else. Take a few moments to think about just what it is for you- what is stopping you from scoring 5 and fuelling your body as the high performance engine it really is!

What changes can you make?

Thinking about your daily and weekly routine, what changes might you need to make when it comes to your 'fuel' (and remember to think about what you are drinking too- particularly the caffeinated and alcoholic options!)

For example, last year I really focused on ensuring I was eating well. My issue was that I was just not organised enough- getting to 4pm and realising I had eaten nothing all day save for 2 flat whites! So we tried a few different things to try and make it easier to be organised in our home! We used 'Aussie Farmers' so that our dinners were under control (they deliver the ingredients and recipes on a Monday for the week!) I got stuck into the smoothie craze. and now I have a blender at home and at work and ensure that the freezers are stocked with frozen fruit in case of a late lunch emergency! And I am addicted to rocket, fig and pomegranate salads for lunch- I can whip them up in 4 mins now! All in all, I have really noticed the difference!

Take a few moments and think about just what changes you could make to ensure you are eating (and drinking) really well-

The image consists of a series of horizontal teal lines of uniform thickness, spaced evenly apart, extending across the entire width of the frame. The lines are set against a plain white background, creating a simple, striped pattern.

A few tips on 'Fuel'



When it comes to how you are fuelling your body, keep these things in mind-

- Fresh food is best! (not the easiest if you are a poorly skilled cook like me, but if I can do it, anyone can!)
- A balanced diet- remember that old food pyramid from when we were kids- fruit, vegetables, meat & fish, grains and dairy and ideally more from the first 2 than the last 3!
- Regular meals & healthy snacks
- Lots and lots of water- why drink anything else... well coffee is an exception here!
- Watch the alcohol



A few things that have worked for me-

- Batching- preparing a few days worth of things does help, the only downside is you can get a bit sick of eating the same stuff all the time.
- Preparing lunch for work- I am not always the best at this but when I do, I am so grateful as I often find myself eating at my desk! Salads are a gem as are some of Sarah's recipes that you will find at the back of my book.
- Smoothies- I am addicted! My favourite- 2 frozen bananas, a cup of almond milk, a tablespoon of peanut butter, a scoop of cacao and a scoop of 'macca powder' and you have the yummiest, healthy chocolate thickshake ever!
- Delivery services like Aussie Farmers or even Coles and Woolies online can really help save you time too.
- Have a stash of healthy snacks at the office and at home.

You have to 'Move'!



Rather than lecturing you on the benefits of regular exercise I am instead going to encourage you to just think of it as 'moving'! Daily lawyer life tends to involve more sitting than standing, more 'being still' than moving and the only running most of us do is because we are late to Court!

We need to be moving more and there are ways you can do it without taking up marathon running (although if that is your goal I say go for it!) We read last week that so much of our brain's natural happiness occurs during or after exercise. I find most of us lawyers enjoy exercise, the difficulty again is a lack of time- there are just other things that always seem to be more important.

But I am going to challenge you on that- what could really be more important than your health? To be healthy you will need to be moving every day, as much as possible, even with a bit of gusto from time to time.

But I really don't have time!

Just in case you are still trying to tell yourself that you really don't have time to work some regular exercise... oops, I mean movement... into your everyday life, then let's just recap why moving is so important for us lawyers-

We are in a brain job- our minds need to be working at their best to be the best lawyers we can be. When we exercise, our brains release endorphins that are like a natural happy juice- they make us feel good and more importantly, help us to better manage pain and stress. But research also tells us over and over that regular exercise will mean you-

- have a lower susceptibility to illness
- have more energy therefore are more productive both at work and at home
- will be in a better mood
- will be able to sleep better
- will boost your memory and intelligence
- will lower risk of dementia in old age

It's time for another Challenge!

When I was writing my book I had such a great time creating the 'movement challenge' and now I am really excited as I will get to try it out on all of you for the first time! This week, aside from focusing on how you are fuelling your body, this challenge will encourage you to think carefully about how much you really could move during the day if you just try a few different things! I of course require daily updates in our Facebook page (video where appropriate!) You can read the full details of the challenge in my book from pages 85-88 but here is the summary!

Day 1 (Monday!)

Find your 10 favourite dance tracks, load them in a playlist and go! Run, skip, jump, play tag or dance it out until all 10 songs have played!

Day 2 (Tuesday!)

Take a really fast walk for at least 30 minutes! Perhaps a walking meeting, a walking conference call or just a walk- off you go! Fast!

Day 3 (Wednesday!)

Dictatathon day! Every time you pick up the phone or a dictaphone you must stand, march, squat, balance on one leg- whatever it is, move!

Day 4 (Thursday!)

Race Day! Set your timer for 30 minutes and go! Clean your home, your office, your garage or backyard- whatever it is you are going for speed!

Day 5 (Friday!)

It's time for a Walkathon! Set the alarm on your phone to go off once every hour today and when it does take that 6 minute unit to walk around your office or even around the block! Get to walking!

Day 6 (Saturday!)

Get outside! Take the kids, your partner or a friend and run, kick a ball, throw a frisbee- just get outside and go!

Day 7 (Sunday!)

It's Dance Party Day! Dance in the kitchen, the lounge room, the backyard! Oh and we really need video of this one!!

A photograph of a person riding a bicycle on a dirt path, with a quote overlay in white cursive script.

*'Exercise is my new happiness drug,
and I will swallow it every day!'*

How did you go?

I am really hoping you have embraced the movement challenge this week and if so, write down a few words about how it made you feel (I won't be offended if 'silly' appears here!)

Your 'Movement' Challenges?

Just like with our diets, most of us don't deliberately go out of our way to avoid exercise but there is a good chance that you could do with a bit more movement in your life! Take a few moments to write down just how you will get more movement into your day, week, month and year.

You need to 'Sleep'!



Sleep is essential for good health. It is the time our body, particularly our brain, takes to repair, rest, store memory and prepare for the next day. I am sure I don't have to convince you that when you don't get enough sleep, you find thinking, working and living the next day so much harder.

Most of us need seven to eight hours of uninterrupted sleep each night. Some people cope just fine with as little as five hours, while others need at least ten hours. Either way, modern life tends to mean that most of us don't get enough sleep a lot of the time.

The impact of a lack of sleep

Aside from causing us to feel (and look!) terrible, a lack of sleep has significant effects on our brain functioning. A lack of sleep has been associated with-

- Increased risk of serious health conditions including anxiety & depression, heart disease, diabetes & heart attack
- Loss of memory
- Increased risk of obesity
- Hormone imbalance in our body- affecting the ability of our bones, muscles, cells and tissues to regenerate and repair
- Poor immune system

Do you get enough sleep?

This week I encourage you to record the time you go to bed each night and the time you wake in the morning and if you have broken sleep, record why (for me it is because London has a habit of jumping into our bed at about 3am and then lying like a star fish in the middle for the rest of the night!)

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What did you learn?

Thinking about your sleep pattern for the week, what does it show?
What changes could you make to ensure you get the sleep you need and can operate at your best?

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Week 3 Summary

When it comes to fuelling my body like a race car I will-

When it comes to moving I will-

When it comes to rest, I will-

And the Movement challenge made me realise....

Happiness is...