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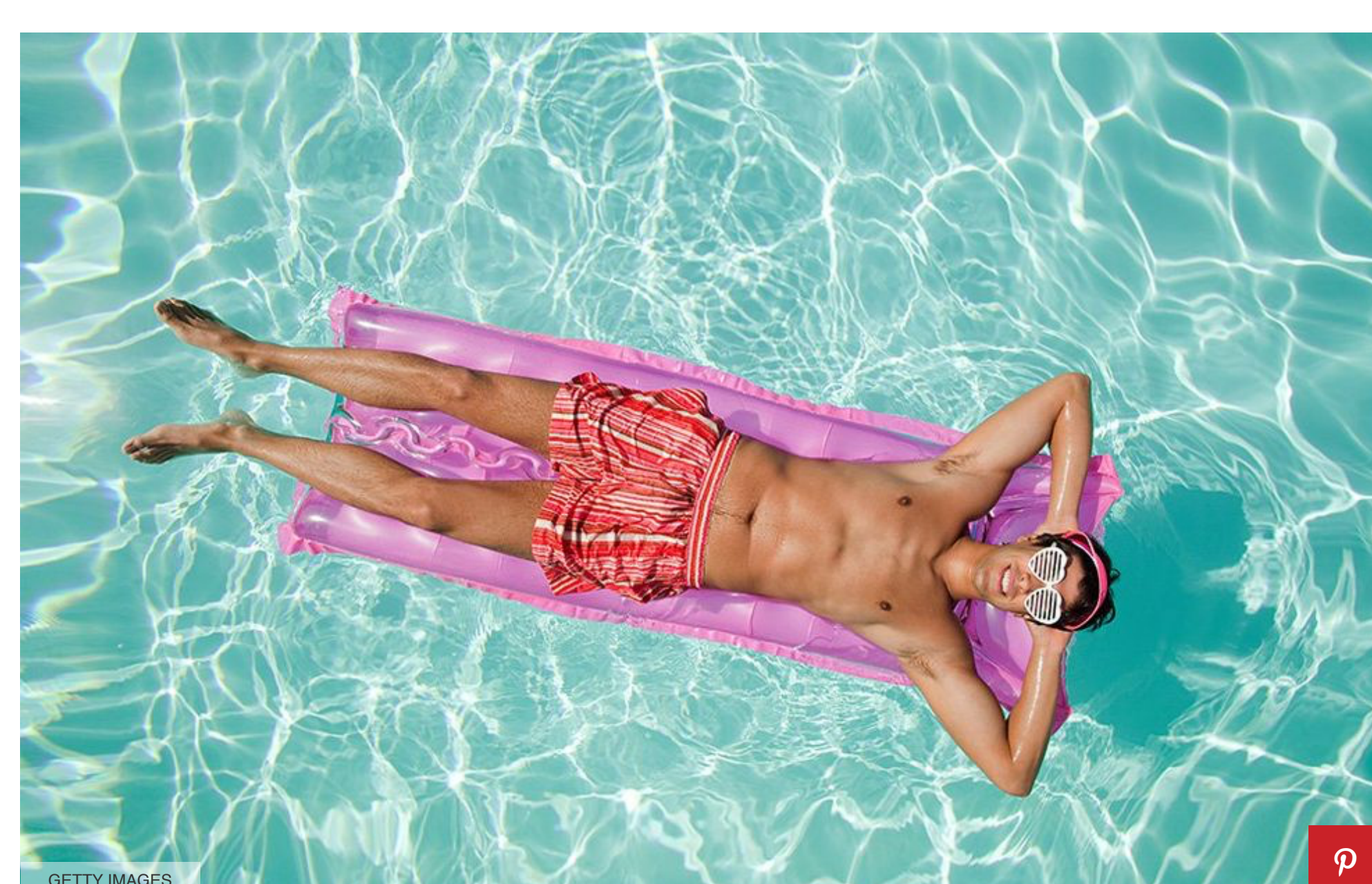
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Thinking Happy Thoughts Really Can Stop You From Being So Stressed

Yes, there is a benefit to looking on the bright side

MH BY IAN SERVANTES MAY 15, 2017



If you've felt blue or overly stressed, chances are someone has told you to think happy thoughts. It may seem like overly simple advice, but science has found that there's actually something to it. (And here are [20 other methods you can use to live a happier life.](#))

A recent study from Rutgers University found that thinking about happy memories can shut down your body's stress response, according to *Research Digest*. To come to this conclusion, which was published in *Nature Human Behavior*, Mauricio Delgado and Megan Speer stressed out 134 volunteers by videotaping them while they dunked their hands into ice cold water. Some spent the time thinking about a positive experience like visiting Disneyland, while the others thought about something mundane like getting luggage ready for the trip.

The group who got to think happy thoughts came out of the experience not only felt better, they had only 15 percent of the stress hormone cortisol as those who thought about something emotionally neutral.

The researchers conducted the same experiment afterward but also scanned their brains using an fMRI. Those who thought about happy memories had increased activity in the regions of the brain associated with emotional regulation and cognitive control, as well as those linked to processing rewards.

"These findings highlight the restorative and protective function of self-generated positive emotions via memory recall the face of stress," Delgado and Speer said.

Now we know the value of happy thoughts is much greater than a platitude. Put it on a motivational poster with an asterisk that says, "Backed by the scientific method."

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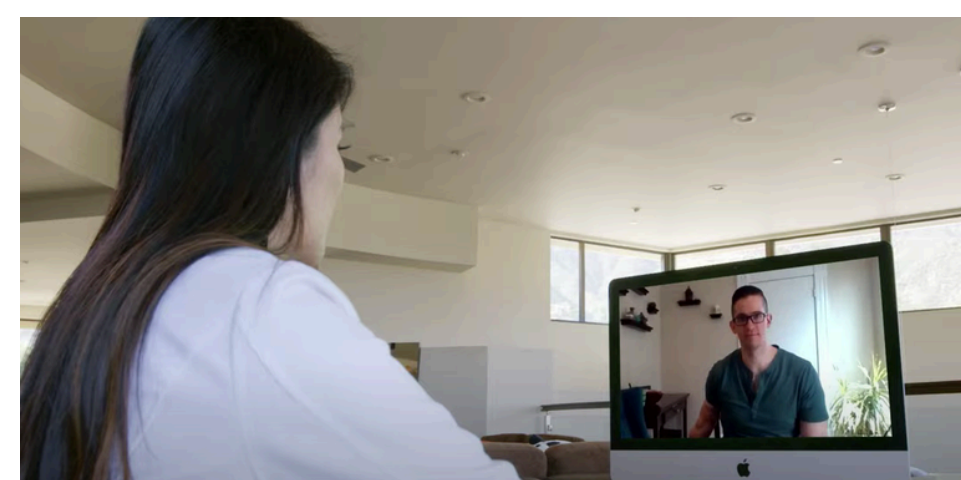


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