

Playing to your strengths

February 14 2019, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter



(HealthDay)—Everyone has certain personality strengths that make them unique. For instance, you might be the type of person who loves to nurture others or who always tells it like it is and is known for your

honesty.

Studies on [human psychology](#) have found that developing your unique set of strengths can lead to happiness and even help overcome depression.

But research has also shown that, all too often, rather than capitalizing on their strengths, people are more motivated to try to fix what they see as weaknesses. That could amount to wasted energy and might not even be desirable. Neglecting your strengths can cause them to fade. This can be true for a trait like kindness as well as one like creativity.

On the other hand, developing strengths with what experts call "positive psychology interventions" leads to [personal growth](#). The idea is to use one or more strengths in a new way every week through activities that lead to positive feelings, behaviors or thoughts.

To get started, make a list of your strengths. The ones you put at the top of your list—those that make you feel the best about yourself—are your signature strengths. But some people get greater happiness from developing the ones farther down the page, so don't feel as though you must limit your focus.

Next, assign yourself activities that are simple yet stimulating. To develop [critical thinking](#), for instance, attend a seminar on a topic you'd like to learn more about. To work on creativity, start a new art project or create a photo journal. To strengthen perseverance, take on a new responsibility and set a short deadline to accomplish it. To enhance gratitude, thank a loved one for an action you've started to take for granted. Now use these examples to create more of your own.

More information: Berkeley's Greater Good Science Center has a [weeklong online action-oriented program](#) of exercises that will show you

how to use your strengths.

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Citation: Playing to your strengths (2019, February 14) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-02-strengths.html>

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