Pleasant Activities List

Research has shown that ratings of mood improve if you add some pleasant activities to your routine. Here are some strategies to use pleasant activities to manage stress and add some fun to your life:

- Plan for at least one pleasant activity per day, even if just a few minutes long.
- The activity should not be for someone else … it should be designed to give you joy.
- If you can’t do something you used to enjoy, think about a good replacement. For example, you may not be able to go deep sea fishing, but you might enjoy visiting the boat show or just walking on a pier.
- Aim for gentle pleasures, like taking a walk in a favorite place, walking the dog, or taking time to read the comic strips.
- Mix it up! Variety is the spice of life.
- Simplify – look for simple pleasures that don’t require a lot of preparation or money.
- If you have trouble coming up with activities, think about what you enjoyed in the past.

1. Soaking in the bathtub
2. Planning my career
3. Getting out of (i.e., paying on) debt
4. Collecting things (coins, shells, etc.)
5. Going on vacation
6. Thinking how it will be when I finish school
7. Taking deep breaths
8. Recycling old items
9. Going on a date
10. Relaxing
11. Going to a movie in the middle of the week
12. Jogging, walking
13. Thinking I have done a full day’s work
14. Listening to music
15. Buying household gadgets
16. Lying in the sun
17. Laughing
18. Thinking about my past trips
19. Listening to others
20. Reading magazines or newspapers
21. Hobbies (stamp collecting, model building)
22. Spending an evening with good friends
23. Planning a day’s activities
24. Meeting new people
25. Remembering beautiful scenery
26. Saving money
27. Going home from work
28. Eating
29. Practicing karate, judo, yoga
30. Thinking about retirement
31. Repairing things around the house
32. Working on my car (bicycle)
33. Remembering the words and deeds of loving people
34. Wearing sexy clothes
35. Having quiet evenings
36. Taking care of my plants
37. Buying, selling stock
38. Going swimming
39. Doodling
40. Exercising
41. Collecting old things
42. Going to a party
43. Thinking about buying things
44. Playing golf
45. Playing soccer
46. Flying kites
47. Having discussions with friends
48. Having family get-togethers
49. Riding a motorcycle
50. Sex
51. Running
52. Going camping
53. Singing around the house
54. Arranging flowers
55. Practicing religion (going to church, group praying, etc.)
56. Losing weight
57. Going to the beach
58. Thinking I’m an OK person
59. A day with nothing to do
60. Going to reunions
61. Going skating
62. Going boating
63. Traveling abroad or in the U.S.
64. Painting
65. Doing something spontaneous
66. Doing needlepoint, knitting, cross-stitch, etc.
67. Sleeping
68. Driving
69. Entertaining
70. Going to clubs (garden, Parents without Partners, etc.)
71. Thinking about getting married
72. Going hunting
73. Singing with groups
74. Flirting
75. Playing musical instruments
76. Doing arts and crafts
77. Making a gift for someone
78. Buying records
79. Watching boxing, wrestling
80. Planning parties
81. Cooking
82. Going hiking
83. Writing short stories, novels, poems, or articles
84. Sewing
85. Buying clothes
86. Going out to dinner
87. Working
88. Discussing books
89. Sightseeing
90. Gardening
91. Going to the beauty parlor
92. Early morning coffee and newspaper
93. Playing tennis
94. Kissing
95. Watching children (play)
96. Thinking I have a lot more going for me than most people
97. Going to plays and concerts
98. Daydreaming
99. Planning to go to school
100. Thinking about sex
101. Driving or taking a train cross-country
102. Listening to the stereo
103. Refinishing furniture
104. Watching TV
105. Making lists of tasks
106. Going bike riding
107. Walks in the woods (or at the waterfront)
108. Giving gifts
109. Traveling to national parks
110. Completing a task
111. Watching a spectator sport (football, hockey, baseball)
112. Eating a favorite food
113. Teaching
114. Photography
115. Going fishing
116. Thinking about pleasant events
117. Playing with animals
118. Flying a plane
119. Reading fiction
120. Acting
121. Spending time by yourself
122. Writing diary entries or letters
123. Cleaning
124. Reading nonfiction
125. Taking children places
126. Dancing
127. Going on a picnic
128. Thinking “I did that pretty well” after doing something
129. Meditating
130. Playing volleyball
131. Having lunch with a friend
132. Going to the mountains
133. Thinking about people I like
134. Thoughts about happy moments in my childhood
135. Splurging
136. Playing cards
137. Solving riddles mentally
138. Having a political discussion
139. Playing softball
140. Seeing and/or showing photos or slides
141. Playing guitar
142. Doing crossword puzzles
143. Shooting pool
144. Dressing up and looking nice
145. Reflecting on how I’ve improved
146. Buying things for myself (perfume, golf balls, etc.)
147. Talking on the phone
148. Going to museums
149. Thinking religious thoughts
150. Lighting candles
151. Listening to the radio
152. Getting a massage
153. Saying “I love you”
154. Thinking about my good qualities
155. Buying books
156. Taking a sauna or a steam bath
157. Going skiing
158. White-water canoeing or rafting
159. Going bowling
160. Doing woodworking or carpentry
161. Fantasizing about the future
162. Taking ballet, tap dancing
163. Debating
164. Sitting in a sidewalk café
165. Having an aquarium
166. Going horseback riding
167. Thinking about becoming active in the community
168. Doing something new
169. Making jigsaw puzzles
170. Thinking I’m a person who can cope
171. Being in the country
172. Making contributions to religious, charitable, or other groups
173. Talking about sports
174. Meeting someone new
175. Listening to live music
176. Planning trips or vacations
177. Rock climbing or mountaineering
178. Reading the scriptures or other sacred works
179. Going to service, civic, or social club meetings
180. Rearranging or redecorating my room or house
181. Being naked
182. Reading a “How to Do It” article or book
183. Reading stories, novels, poems or plays
184. Going to lectures or hearing speakers
185. Writing a song or a piece of music
186. Saying something clearly
187. Doing something nice for my parents
188. Restoring antiques
189. Talking to myself
190. Working in politics
191. Working on machines
192. Completing a difficult task
193. Solving a problem, puzzle or crossword
194. Laughing
195. Going to a celebration
196. Shaving
197. Having lunch with friends or associates
198. Taking a shower
199. Riding in an airplane
200. Exploring the wilderness
201. Having a frank and open conversation
202. Thinking about myself or my life
203. Speaking or learning a foreign language
204. Going to a business meeting or a convention
205. Being in a sporty or expensive car
206. Cooking
207. Being helped
208. Wearing informal clothes
209. Combing or brushing my hair
210. Taking a nap
211. Canning, freezing, making preserves, etc.
212. Solving a personal problem
213. Being in a city
214. Singing to myself
215. Making food or crafts to sell or give away
216. Playing chess or checkers
217. Doing craftwork (pottery, jewelry, leather, beads and weaving)
218. Scratching myself
219. Putting on makeup
220. Designing or drafting
221. Visiting people who are sick, shut in, or in trouble
222. Cheering or rooting
223. Being popular at a gathering
224. Watching wild animals
225. Having an original idea
226. Landscaping or yardwork
227. Reading professional literature
228. Wearing new clothes
229. Just sitting and thinking
230. Seeing good things happen to my family and friends
231. Going to a fair, carnival, circus, zoo or amusement park
232. Talking about philosophy
233. Planning or organizing something
234. Listening to the sounds of nature
235. Dating or courting
236. Having a lively talk
237. Having friends come to visit
238. Playing sports
239. Introducing people who I think would like each other
240. Getting letters, cards or notes
241. Watching the clouds, sky or a storm
242. Going on outings to the park, a picnic, a barbecue, etc.
243. Giving a speech or a lecture
244. Reading maps
245. Gathering natural objects (rocks or driftwood)
246. Working on my finances
247. Wearing clean clothes
248. Making a major purchase or investment
249. Helping someone
250. Getting promoted
251. Hearing jokes
252. Talking about my children or grandchildren
253. Going to a crusade
254. Talking about good health
255. Seeing beautiful scenery
256. Eating good healthy meals
257. Improving my health (having my teeth fixed, getting new glasses, changing my diet)
258. Doing a job well
259. Having spare time
260. Loaning something
261. Being noticed as sexually attractive
262. Making others happy
263. Counseling someone
264. Going to a health club
265. Learning to do something new
266. Thinking about my parents
267. Supporting causes you believe in (social, political or environmental)
268. Kicking leaves, sand, pebbles, etc.
269. Playing lawn sports (badminton, croquet, bocce, horseshoes)
270. Seeing famous people
271. Going to the movies or renting one
272. Budgeting my time
273. Being praised by people I admire
274. Feeling a spiritual presence in my life
275. Doing a project in my own way
276. Doing odd jobs around the house
277. Crying
278. Being told I am needed
279. Being at a family reunion or get-together
280. Giving a party
281. Washing my hair
282. Coaching someone
283. Going to a restaurant
284. Seeing or smelling a flower or a plant
285. Being invited out
286. Receiving honors
287. Using perfume, cologne, or aftershave
288. Having someone agree with me
289. Reminiscing about old times
290. Getting up early in the morning
291. Having peace and quiet
292. Doing experiments and other scientific work
293. Visiting friends
294. Playing football
295. Being counseled
296. Saying prayers
297. Giving a massage
298. Taking adult education courses
299. Doing favors for people
300. Talking with people I enjoy
301. Being asked for help or advice
302. Helping other people solve their problems
303. Playing board games
304. Sleeping soundly at night
305. Snowmobile or dune buggy riding
306. Being in a support group
307. Dreaming at night
308. Playing ping-pong
309. Brushing my teeth
310. Walking barefoot
311. Playing frisbee or catch
312. Doing housework or laundry
313. Petting and necking
314. Amusing people
315. Going to a barber or hair stylist
316. Having houseguests
317. Being with someone I love
318. Sleeping late
319. Starting a new project
320. Being assertive
321. Going to the library
322. Playing rugby or lacrosse
323. Birdwatching
324. Shopping
325. Playing video games or going to an arcade
326. People watching
327. Building or watching a fire
328. Selling or trading something
329. Finishing a project or task
330. Apologizing
331. Learning a new computer skill
332. Being a leader
333. Being with happy people
334. Playing games
335. Writing cards or notes
336. Asking for help or advice
337. Talking about my hobbies or special interests
338. Smiling at people
339. Playing in sand, a stream, the grass, etc.
340. Expressing my love to someone
341. Talking with friends over coffee or tea
342. Playing handball, paddleball, squash, etc.
343. “Surfing” the internet
344. Remembering a departed friend or loved one, visiting the cemetery
345. Staying up late
346. Going skiing or snowboarding
347. Having family members or friends do something that makes me proud of them
348. Going to auctions, garage sales, etc.
349. Thinking about an interesting question
350. Doing volunteer work, working on community service projects
351. Water skiing, surfing, and scuba diving
352. Defending or protecting someone; stopping fraud or abuse
353. Hearing a good sermon
354. Winning a competition
355. Making a new friend
356. Reading cartoons, comic strips or comic books
357. Borrowing something
358. Traveling in a group
359. Seeing old friends
360. Mentoring someone
361. Using my strength
362. Attending an opera or the ballet
363. Playing with pets
364. Looking at the stars or the moon
365. Being coached