



the

# SPINAL COLUMN

## brain hacks to make you happy

This may be one of the coolest things that you'll read that can help you become more happy! Trick your brain into releasing chemicals that make you happy. Four neurotransmitters are responsible for this: Dopamine, Oxytocin, Serotonin, and Endorphins. **Dopamine** is the reward chemical; feelings of accomplishment and reward are associated with motivation. Gratitude has been shown to increase levels of dopamine. Something simple like naming three things you are grateful for everyday will increase these levels. **Oxytocin** is the cuddly feeling hormone that gives you fuzzy warm sensations. Simply wrapping your arms around yourself and giving yourself a hug can trigger production of this chemical. **Serotonin** is our happiness chemical that determines our mood. Laughter is the easiest way to stimulate production of serotonin. The best thing is that the body does not know the difference between a real laugh and a fake laugh! Try counting to 10 in laughs. You'll likely start laughing for real because it's a ridiculous exercise but it works! **Endorphins** are your body's natural pain reliever and are involved in reducing symptoms of depression. Exercise is the number one way to produce endorphins so it's best to get moving! Side note: dark chocolate also promotes the release of endorphins. Maybe a mix of exercise and dark chocolate? Enjoy feeling more happy!



## super easy instant pot wonton soup (without wontons... sorry)



Let's hope this is the last soup recipe for the season! This soup is a staple in our house for many reasons: 1. it's easy 2. it's quick, and 3. you likely already have most ingredients

### BROTH INGREDIENTS:

6 cups chicken stock  
 ½ inch ginger grated  
 2 cloves minced garlic  
 1 Tbsp rice vinegar  
 3 Tbsps soy sauce  
 1 Tbsp chili sauce  
 2 Tbsps honey  
 ½ tsp sesame oil

### OTHER INGREDIENTS:

1 frozen chicken breast  
 5-6 large mushrooms of choice  
 2 green onions chopped  
 1 carrot julienned or spiral cut  
 2-3 baby bok choy chopped  
 rice noodles

Put all the broth ingredients, mushrooms, and frozen chicken breast into the instant pot and turn it on high pressure for 6 minutes (if chicken is thawed then change cook time to 2 minutes). When done, open the release valve. Prepare rice noodles. Take chicken breast out and peel chicken apart and put back in the soup. If you are eating right away then put rice noodles and desired vegetables in a bowl and add the hot broth mix and leave for 5 minutes while the vegetables cook. If eating later then ensure broth is hot enough to cook vegetables. Add Sriracha for an extra kick! You'll love it!