

Next time you're in a slump, skip the expensive shopping spree or spa treatment and try one of these affordable tips.



Are eco-friendly feminine hygiene products safer to use?

YES. Pads and liners made with 100 percent cotton are hypoallergenic because they're free of plastic and wood cellulose. I recommend pads instead of tampons to avoid introducing anything foreign into the body and to eliminate the risk of toxic shock syndrome. But if you prefer tampons, the safest ones are made with organic cotton, which isn't grown with pesticides and hasn't been genetically modified (which can disrupt vaginal flora). Always buy fragrance and chlorine free.

Try: MAXIM ([maximhy.com](http://maximhy.com)), NATRACARE ([natracare.com](http://natracare.com)), and SEVENTH GENERATION ([seventhgeneration.com](http://seventhgeneration.com)) cotton pads and organic cotton liners and tampons.

—Helene B. Leonetti, M.D., OB-GYN in Bethlehem, Pa.

## 3 ways to cheer up

**1 READ INSTEAD OF WATCHING TV.** In a 34-year-long survey of more than 25,000 people, those who described themselves as very happy were 21 percent more likely to read a newspaper, and they watched about three hours less television than those who were unhappy. "Happier people are more active and engage their minds and bodies," says coauthor John P. Robinson, Ph.D., a professor of sociology at the University of Maryland. **EVEN HAPPIER: Join a book club.** The survey also reports that the happiest people socialize with friends, neighbors, and family.

**2 DRINK A WARM BEVERAGE.** You're significantly nicer to strangers after just holding a hot drink for ten seconds, according to a 2008 study in the journal *Science*. Researchers believe that physical warmth triggers psychological warmth. **EVEN HAPPIER: Sprinkle on spices.** Add cinnamon, nutmeg, or cloves to that warm drink—they have all been studied as natural antidepressants.

**3 FLOAT IN THE TUB.** After resting in a salted bath, patients' anxiety and depression were lessened by about one fourth, according to a Swedish study published in the *International Journal of Stress Management*. Their levels of prolactin, a hormone that contributes to relaxation, rose by as much as 33 percent. **EVEN HAPPIER: Wear ear plugs and an eye mask.** To achieve full relaxation, eliminate external stimuli by blocking out all distractions. —Daniel Mazori



**QUICK TIP: GENTLE DENTAL DETOX.** To disinfect your toothbrush naturally, keep it in a cup with one ounce of water and four drops of Aura Cacia Cassia [cinnamon] Bark Essential Oil (\$7.50; [auracacia.com](http://auracacia.com)). Rinse off before brushing.

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