

BUST OUT OF A *BAD* DAY

It's just one of those days, we get it. Read on to find out how you can cheer up quick.

TACTIC 1

Fake It

We're not talking orgasms. When it comes to feeling bad, numerous studies have shown that pretending to be in a better mood can actually put you in one. "Positive actions, like a smile, are encouraging and naturally lifts your mood," says Dr Lim Boon Leng, consultant psychiatrist and medical director at Dr BL Lim Centre For Psychological Wellness. They send happiness signals to your brain and make you feel much better. And try looking in the mirror while you do it; it'll shoot another indicator to your brain that you're happy.

TACTIC 2

Proceed To The Nearest Exit

Sometimes the quickest way to turn a terrible day around is just to get up and leave. "It can be hard to shake bad feelings because there could be reminders everywhere of what set you off," says psychologist Susanne Babel. If you're feeling angry due to your frenemy's snide remarks, staying



Stick on some music and put out the blues.

at the party isn't going to help. "Instead, take a walk outside or head to Starbucks," says Babel. "Taking in different sights can defuse your grumpy disposition, because you're busy processing your new location rather than dwelling on what was wrong in the old one."

TACTIC 3

Throw A Punch

Going to a Muay Thai class or taking a jab at a punching bag really can turn

things around. "Especially when you want to release repressed angst arising from work or family," says Dr Lim.

Exercising releases endorphins that work quickly to make you more joyful. Doing something that makes you grunt will help you work through your frustration.



TACTIC 4

Slick On Bright Lipstick

Vibrant red ... hot pink ... whatever vivid hue you choose, wearing fun lipstick can do wonders. The reason: "Seeing yourself look good in the mirror improves your self esteem and helps you feel better about yourself," says Dr Lim. Don't feel like putting on makeup? Pop into Sephora and spritz on a new fragrance.

**TACTIC 5**

Have A Mini Fit

Sometimes, you just need a good venting session, but who you vent to and how you do it is crucial. Choose a pal who's a great listener. "But before you start, ask your friend to stop you when it's been 15 minutes," says Darlene Mininni, author of *The Emotional Toolkit*. "That's a good amount of time to get things off your chest. Any longer and you'll start focusing on the negative stuff too much."

TACTIC 6

Veg Out

A recent study found that a bad mood is more likely to get worse if someone's mind is allowed to wander. But if the person is distracted, they start to feel better. "Let your favourite tunes or a juicy television show distract you," says Mininni. "When you become wrapped up in a show, your mind is focused on someone else's life and you can't dwell on yours." Just be careful what you pick. Avoid the news or any sort of crime drama. "When you're already having a dark moment, watching this kind of thing can sink you deeper. Choose something fun that holds your attention," says Mininni.

TACTIC 7

Get A Li'l Bit Lazy

A sucky mood can send you into a frenzy — suddenly, you think getting everything done on your to-do list will make you feel better. But that can just make things worse. "If you try to tackle a ton, it can bring you down more," says Mininni. Instead, pick a task that is easy to accomplish but that also has noticeable results. Sick of your messy room? Choose one little thing to do — like dust off all your shelves.

THE LAST THING YOU WANNA HEAR

If someone utters these words to you when you're obviously in a foul mood, you have our permission to go at them.



"Hi, honey. It's Mum calling again ..."

"You look tired."

"Can you stay late?"

"Is that what you're wearing?"



"Ummm, are you PMSing or what?"

"Haven't seen you at the gym in a while."

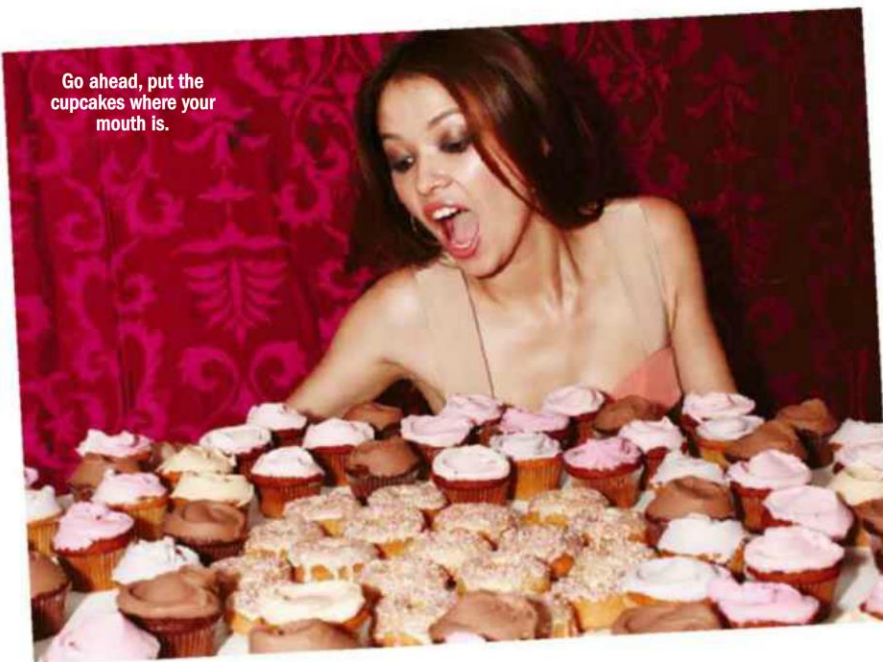
"Sorry, we just ran out of coffee. Water?"



"Just suck it up."

TEXT: BETHANY HETTMAN; ADDITIONAL TEXT: MALIA GRIGGS; CHIA EE KHIM; PHOTOGRAPHY: (WOMAN WITH CUPCAKES) NICK ONKEN; (TELEPHONE) NIKOLAI SOROKIN/FOTOLIA; (COFFEE) ALAMY; (DRESS) BEN GOLDSTEIN/STUDIO D; GETTY IMAGES

Go ahead, put the cupcakes where your mouth is.

**TACTIC 8**

Yeah, Devour The Cupcake

Your day has been particularly tough, and you need something that'll add a bit of brightness. A quick and easy fix? "Treating yourself to something indulgent and that you really love — like a fancy baked good or caramel popcorn — causes a surge in dopamine in the reward system of your brain," says Dr Lim. "This gives you a sense of satisfaction and feelings of happiness." Just don't scarf a dozen cupcakes or drink an entire bottle of wine. "Overindulgence can have the opposite effect," says Babbel. "On top of feeling crummy, you're now feeling either sickly full or guilty about all those extra calories." ■