

Make happiness habitual

Do you want to curb your caffeine or sugar cravings for good? According to a new brain study by researchers at Rutgers University in New Jersey and New York University, thinking happy thoughts could help repress your cravings.

Although it seems simplistic, it was shown on MRI scans that positive thoughts of clouds and oceans (in the case of this study) slightly lowered activity in the brain's reward centre. Adds researcher Mauricio Delgado, thinking about things that one really cares about, such as family and friends, could make this technique more powerful.



Can't stop sneezing? Scientists may have found a medication-free solution.

Hypnotherapy could relieve hay-fever symptoms

Self-hypnosis could be used to relieve the symptoms of hay fever and possibly reduce the amount of medication needed by sufferers. Previous studies have demonstrated that hypnosis can regulate the immune system by facilitating the production of immune T-cells. Self-hypnosis may be an effective medical approach for many ailments, such as helping to alleviate stress, says psychologist John Gruzelier, editor of the journal *Contemporary Hypnosis*.

More recent studies at the University of Basel in Switzerland have shown that hypnosis can alter one's blood flow, an increase of which is said to cause the blood vessels to swell, and this induces hay fever.

Mike Matthews, chair of Allergy UK and a retired general practitioner, says that it is well documented that hypnosis can alter blood flow. 'Through your mind, in a way we don't understand, you can directly affect the blood flow of a small part of your body.'

103,680

The number of times an adult's heart beats in one day.

Are we morally corrupt?

Crime is South Africa's number one problem, and with its history of racial discrimination, new local research has raised the question: Are we, as a nation, morally corrupt? Studies conducted by TNS Research Surveys have rendered worrying results:

20% of adults claim to buy pirated DVDs and CDs.

25% of adults say they know people who have bought stolen goods.

33% of drivers have driven a vehicle in the last six months, knowing that they were under the influence of alcohol.

20% of South Africans feel that it is acceptable to refuse people admission to

places, meetings or events because of their race.

25% of South Africans would keep the money if a cashier gave them R50 too much change.

90% of South Africans feel that corruption has become a way of life.

These results suggest a level of disregard for the law and basic human rights, according to Neil Higgs, director of innovation and development at TNS Research Surveys. 'These results come from all demographics and from people from all the major religions, indicating that a society-wide effort is now needed.'