

Gratitude List

Gratitude is not just some abstract, sentimental notion -- it is a concrete practice, philosophy, and approach to life that can improve your physical and mental health.

At the University of California at Davis, researchers are looking more closely at gratitude and how it affects our health and overall sense of well being. Not surprisingly, they have found that those who practice an attitude of gratitude are less anxious and less depressed and they experience less physical discomfort.

Fortunately, it's very easy to incorporate gratitude into your own life:

Keep a gratitude journal. In comparison with those who write about negative or even neutral life events, people who keep regular gratitude journals exercise more regularly... experience fewer physical symptoms... are more optimistic about the upcoming week... more likely to attain their personal, academic, interpersonal and health-based goals... and feel better as a whole.

Set aside a moment each day to think of several things for which you are grateful. Anything is fair game -- it could be your family, your health, a recent promotion or just the fact that it's a sunny day and the flowers are blooming. Compared with those who focus on the negative aspects of their lives, researchers note that people who practice daily gratitude experience higher levels of alertness, enthusiasm, determination, attentiveness and energy. They also spread the good feelings to others by being more likely to extend a helping hand to those in need.

With all the challenges that face us in the world today, it's tough to stay positive. Still, simple things like the smile on your child's face, dinner with good friends or a warm cozy bed are all reminders that there is much to be grateful for. Thanks are not just for Thanksgiving... maintaining your focus on the good in life and truly appreciating it can give you a physical, psychological and spiritual lift year-round.

We often take for granted many precious and wonderful aspects of our lives. A lack of gratitude can lead to self-destructive behavior such as envy, lethargy, sloth, lack of creativity, and reduced motivation. Not a pretty picture, huh? Make a gratitude list when you're experiencing any of these symptoms to nip that negative attitude in the bud. Remember all that you have to be thankful for and it will be much harder to get stuck in a rut.

To create your Gratitude List, check the box next to all the gifts that you feel grateful for, and add more blessings of your own.

- My good health
- My strength
- My belief in God
- My family
- My amazing mother
- My amazing father

- My healthy child
- My favorite television shows
- My loving husband
- My terrific partner
- My great job
- My favorite movies
- My mentor
- My favorite professional sports team
- My wonderful friends
- My education
- My favorite books
- My incredible boyfriend
- My loving pet
- My favorite music
- Modern medical care
- My good sense
- My determination
- My ability to think clearly
- My ability to help myself
- My ability to express myself
- My ability to give back to the world
- A chance to live a new life
- My intelligence
- My fashion sense
- My right of free speech
- My great sex life
- My sense of humor
- Nature
- Democracy
- My sobriety
- My talent