

Restore Activity Series

Practice Gratitude



**Simple Steps to
Shifting Your Perspective**

Developing a State of Thankfulness



Gratitude is more than just being grateful for what you have. It's a shift in your perspective to consistently being thankful - a state of being rather than just a feeling. When your thoughts are stuck in the negative, especially when dealing with depression or anxiety, it can be difficult to shift your perspective. That's why practice is such an important aspect of gratitude.

- Think about all of the things in your life that you're grateful for. Make a list of those things - you will use this later in your practice.
- Designate a place where you can write every day. This can be a journal, a document on your computer, a simple notebook, even a stack of sticky notes.
- Every day, spend a few minutes writing down what you're grateful for. Use the list you made previously for inspiration if you're feeling stuck but it's important that you get really specific.
- For example, instead of just writing "I'm grateful for my home," write something like, "Today I was able to cook a delicious and healthy meal in my own kitchen that fueled me for the day."
- Making this a regular practice is a great way to start, but there are other ways to deepen your gratitude practice - check out some other ideas on the next page.

Take It a Step Further



Things I'm Grateful For

Other Ways to Practice Gratitude

- Share your gratitude with your significant other, friends, or other family members
- Say thank you, even for the little things
- Write a letter to someone who did something for you or for whom you are grateful for
- Put your gratitude on social media - you never know who you can positively impact by being positive
- Review your gratitude journal at the end of the year to see all the good you experienced
- Do something nice for someone else
- Spend quality time with the people that you love and who make you feel good

The Research

Below are some key pieces of research and articles around the benefits of practicing gratitude.

Brown, Joshua, and Joel Wong. "How Gratitude Changes You and Your Brain." Greater Good Magazine, 6 June 2017, greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/how_gratitude_changes_you_and_your_brain.

Emmons, Robert A., and Michael E. McCullough. "Counting Blessings Versus Burdens: An Experimental Investigation of Gratitude and Subjective Well-Being in Daily Life." Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, vol. 84, no. 2, 2003, pp. 377-89, doi:10.1037/0022-3514.84.2.377, news.usc.edu/163123/gratitude-health-research-thanksgiving-usc-experts/.

"Giving thanks can make you happier." Harvard Health Publishing: Harvard Medical School, www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier.

Lindberg, Eric. "Practicing gratitude can have profound health benefits, USC experts say." University of Southern California News, 25 Nov. 2019, news.usc.edu/163123/gratitude-health-research-thanksgiving-usc-experts/.

*Ohio State University. "Gratitude interventions don't help with depression, anxiety: Being grateful has benefits, but not for these issues." ScienceDaily. ScienceDaily, 9 March 2020. www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2020/03/200309130010.htm.

"Practicing Gratitude Ways to Improve Positivity." NIH News In Health, Mar. 2019, newsinhealth.nih.gov/2019/03/practicing-gratitude.

Sansone, Randy A, and Lori A Sansone. "Gratitude and well being: the benefits of appreciation." Psychiatry (Edgmont (Pa. : Township)) vol. 7,11 (2010): 18-22. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC3010965/>.

*While practicing gratitude has many benefits, I do want to acknowledge that it is not considered an effective treatment for depression or anxiety. Please seek a medical professional for help treating either.