**Journaling for Emotional Wellness**

Journaling helps control your symptoms and improve your mood by:

* Helping you prioritize problems, fears, and concerns
* Tracking any symptoms day-to-day so that you can recognize triggers and learn ways to better control them
* Providing an opportunity for positive self-talk and identifying negative thoughts and behaviors

When you have a problem and you're stressed, keeping a journal can help you identify what’s causing that stress or anxiety. Once you’ve identified your stressors, you can work on a plan to resolve the problems and reduce your stress.

Keep in mind that journaling is just one aspect of a healthy lifestyle for better managing stress, anxiety, and mental health conditions. To get the most benefits, be sure you also:

* Relax and meditate each day.
* Eat a healthy, balanced diet.
* Exercise regularly—get in some activity every day.
* Treat yourself to plenty of sleep each night.
* Stay away from alcohol and drugs.

Use your journal to make sure you follow these guidelines daily.

**How to journal**

Try these tips to help you get started with journaling:

* **Try to write every day.**Set aside a few minutes every day to write. This will help you to write in your journal regularly.
* **Make it easy.** Keep a pen and paper handy at all times. Then when you want to write down your thoughts, you can. You can also keep a journal on your smartphone.
* **Write or draw whatever feels right.**Your journal doesn't need to follow any certain structure. It's your own private place to discuss and create whatever you want to express your feelings. Let the words and ideas flow freely. Don't worry about spelling mistakes or what other people might think.
* **Use your journal as you see fit.**You don't have to share your journal with anyone. If you do want to share some of your thoughts with trusted friends and loved ones, you could show them parts of your journal.

Keeping a journal helps you create order when your world feels like it’s in chaos. You get to know yourself by revealing your most private fears, thoughts, and feelings. Look at your writing time as personal relaxation time. It's a time when you can de-stress and wind down. Write in a place that's relaxing and soothing, maybe with a cup of tea. Look forward to your journaling time. And know that you're doing something good for your mind and body.

It’s key whenever you’re building a new habit to [keep your expectations realistic](https://vanillapapers.net/2019/10/20/minimalism-and-hobbies/).

Whenever I fail to take my own advice, I narrow down my goals into a single snippet that I can manage even on my worst days. When 10 minutes of meditation felt like too much and I had problems keeping still, I cut it down to 5 minutes. I also have short guided meditations for the days I’m too tired to go alone.

It doesn’t matter whether you write a single line or three pages – what matters in the beginning is that you form a habit. Make journaling a part of your daily life and anchor it to another habit – like your morning coffee or your evening washing up. And get that journaling in there until it becomes routine and automatic and until you’re no longer fighting with yourself about how badly or well you’re doing it.

Writing about gratitude will lift your spirits and get your thoughts flowing again on the days you’re tired or filled with self-doubt.

This positive energy is downright invigorating.

And it doesn’t have to be complicated. Start with what’s in front of you – your laptop or journal, the balcony or the desk with your morning coffee. Then describe your emotions in detail. Instead of trying to fill up a page with all the things you’re grateful for, try focusing on a few and really let yourself feel the emotion of gratitude.

Gratitude journaling can be life-changing when it’s used in difficult situations or downright irritating relationships. Ask yourself, despite all the bad, what can you learn from a difficult day? What qualities do you admire in your partner – even if you don’t want to be around them right now?

Your journal should feel like it’s yours and it should fit your personality. Maybe that’s a leather-bound notebook that you can whip out comfortably on a business flight. Or maybe that’s a worn cloth-bound notebook filled with painted daisies. Your journal should make you look forward to writing.

And don’t obsess about your handwriting. You’re probably out of practice and it will look messy in the beginning. Handwriting gets better – and more legible – with practice and plenty of patience. So don’t let an un-Instagrammable cursive stop you.

Make some messy doodles or scrawl some quotes into the margins to further break that ice and smash those high expectations. Your journal is your tool – not an Instagram flatlay waiting to happen.

A journal can also be a great substitute for smart phone scrolling. Whenever you find yourself restless and reaching for your smartphone, pull out your journal instead. Sure it may be awkward during a dinner party, but a dentist’s office or bank are perfect settings for a journaling session.

When you’re on vacation, a travel journal can be an incredible tool to write down your sensations when they’re still fresh in your mind. Use a journal to plan your trip and keep track of any great restaurants you’ve tried or museums you’d love to revisit.

If you’re intimidated to write in your journal in public, then don’t worry. It gets easier with time. And it’s helpful to remember that people may shoot you the odd glance, but they actually have no idea whether you’re drafting up a business plan or complaining about your ex.

So let your thoughts flow freely.

Be mindful of your emotions and how journaling is making you feel. Do you feel energized at the end of a journaling session, or just relief that it’s over?

If journaling is not working for you and bringing you results, then it won’t be easy to maintain your daily journaling habit. Make time to look at what isn’t working and experiment to find what journaling technique works best.

Journaling has been called the most effective form of therapy – and it’s absolutely free, too.

Whenever you’re feeling frazzled, overwhelmed or just anxious, there’s nothing like pouring your frustrations out into a journal for some catharsis.

Once you fill up a page or two, you’ll gain some much-needed distance from your troubles. You’ll probably realize things aren’t as bad as they seem and you might even see that silver lining.

Keep your journal in a secure place. And if you’re still worried that others will stumble upon it, then find a hiding space or use a laptop protected with a password.

Journaling can be anything from a fun hobby to a form of meaningful therapy. But you won’t get much benefit if you only wallow in problems or constantly blame yourself.

It’s great to release those pent-up emotions in a journal and it’s helpful to have a rant. But eventually you’ll want to brainstorm about solutions or jot down some things you’re grateful for.

Reference:

<https://www.urmc.rochester.edu/encyclopedia/content.aspx?ContentID=4552&ContentTypeID=1#:~:text=It's%20simply%20writing%20down%20your,and%20improve%20your%20mental%20health>.

https://vanillapapers.net/2019/11/13/journaling-tips/