# How Gratitude Can Improve Your Mental Health

Positive thinking is a great tool and mindset to carry ourselves through life. However, this positive mindset doesn’t always come easy to everyone. Sometimes, people have to [train](https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/gratitude-mental-health-game-changer) their minds to focus on the good in their lives. One way to do this is by creating a gratitude practice. Practicing gratitude means that a person is reminding themselves of things in their life that they are thankful for or positive parts of their life. Gratitude can be practiced in many ways depending on what works best for each person.

## Reducing Stress and Anxiety

One way gratitude can help someone’s mental health is by reducing stress and anxiety. Gratitude helps reduce stress by reframing our thoughts to focus on the good things in our lives. [Studies](https://healthcare.utah.edu/healthfeed/2021/11/practicing-gratitude-better-health-and-well-being) have found that practicing gratitude also helps people handle stressful situations better. Stress will inevitably be present in our lives, but learning how to handle it can greatly decrease the effect it has on our well-being. Having a better handle on stress can decrease the chances of struggling with depression and anxiety.

## Increasing Optimism

[Positive psychology](https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC2894461/) is the study of well-being and how optimism can improve all areas of a person’s life. Positive psychology teaches us that having an optimistic attitude can lead to mental and physical benefits. Adopting this optimistic attitude (including gratitude) can allow people to have a hopeful outlook on the world. Through gratitude and optimism, people can approach difficult situations more positively. This can lead to better solutions and quicker recovery from setbacks.

## Increase Happiness

Gratitude has been [linked](https://www.health.harvard.edu/healthbeat/giving-thanks-can-make-you-happier) to higher levels of happiness. This is because gratitude encourages positive thinking, emotional resilience, and self-acceptance. Gratitude also can help improve our relationships because it helps us be thankful for the people in our lives. Having stronger relationships can help to bring more happiness into a person's life.

## Improve Physical Health

Gratitude can improve physical health by helping improve sleep and helping decrease the likelihood of health problems. Writing down or recalling things you are grateful for before bed can help improve sleep quality. Gratitude has also [been shown](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/12/health/gratitude-benefits-longer-life-wellness/index.html#:~:text=Having%20more%20gratitude%20has%20been,anxiety,%20stress%20and%20depression%20levels.) to help develop a stronger immune system and lower blood pressure.

Everyone’s gratitude practice will look a little different. There is not one specific way to practice

gratitude. It’s important to build your practice around habits that you know you will be able to incorporate into your daily life. For gratitude to help improve your life in the ways we mentioned above, you will need to stay consistent with your practice. If you are having trouble practicing gratitude by yourself, you may try finding an online counselor who can help you through the process. Your counselor or therapist can also serve as accountability to make sure you are keeping up with your goals surrounding gratitude.

If you are interested in working with someone from our practice, you can reach out to us [here](https://michiganpsychologicalcare.com/contact.php). We are always here to help you improve your mental health and well-being. You are never alone!

**References**

<https://adaa.org/learn-from-us/from-the-experts/blog-posts/consumer/gratitude-mental-health-game-changer>

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[https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/12/health/gratitude-benefits-longer-life-wellness](https://www.cnn.com/2024/07/12/health/gratitude-benefits-longer-life-wellness/index.html#:~:text=Having%20more%20gratitude%20has%20been,anxiety%2C%20stress%20and%20depression%20levels)

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