

Gratitude Exercises

Gratitude means appreciating the good things in life, no matter how big or small. Making the practice of gratitude a regular part of your day can build happiness, self-esteem, and provide other health benefits.

Gratitude Journal

Every evening, spend a few minutes writing down some good things about your day. This isn't limited to major events. You might be grateful for simple things, such as a good meal, talking to a friend, or overcoming an obstacle.

Give Thanks

Keep your eyes open throughout the day for reasons to say “thank you.” Make a conscious effort to notice when people do good things, whether for you or others. Tell the person you recognize their good deed, and give a sincere “thank you.”

Mindfulness Walk

Go for a walk and make a special effort to appreciate your surroundings. You can do this by focusing on each of your senses, one at a time. Spend a minute just listening, a minute looking at your surroundings, and so on. Try to notice the sights, sounds, smells, and sensations you would usually miss, such as a cool breeze on your skin, or the clouds in the sky.

Gratitude Letter

Think about someone who you appreciate. This could be a person who has had a major impact on your life, or someone who you would like to thank. Write a letter that describes why you appreciate them, including specific examples and details. It's up to you if you'd like to share the letter or not.

Grateful Contemplation

Remove yourself from distractions such as phones or TV and spend 5-10 minutes mentally reviewing the good things from your day. The key to this technique is *consistency*. Think of it like brushing your teeth or exercise—it should be a normal part of daily self-care. This technique can be practiced as part of prayer, meditation, or on its own.

Gratitude Conversation

With another person, take turns listing 3 things you were grateful for throughout the day. Spend a moment discussing and contemplating each point, rather than hurrying through the list. Make this part of your routine by practicing before a meal, before bed, or at another regular time.