



# Gratitude Makes a Difference

It's easy to think that something as simple as saying "thank you," sending someone a card, or jotting down a list of things you're grateful for won't make a bit of difference.

- **But have you tried it?** Research shows that gratitude can have a positive impact on your mood, well-being, and outlook on life.<sup>2</sup>

Gratitude can even make you more productive and help you perform better.

In a recent study, researchers looked at the power of gratitude for a group of nurses.<sup>3</sup>

Taking care of sick patients is often a stressful and thankless job. It's not uncommon for nurses to experience burnout, health problems or worse. Researchers wanted to find out if gratitude could change that.

For 12 weeks, a group of nurses practiced gratitude and kept track of instances they were thanked by patients or co-workers, or felt grateful.

And you know what? It made a difference. Nurses reported feeling happier. Gratitude helped reduce stress, cut sick days, improve morale, and prevent turnover.

## Want to get your life back on track?

Elrod did after his accident. Even though he had limitations at first, he could still practice gratitude. And it worked. There's a proven way to feel better, improve relationships, feel happier, be more productive, or inspire others: Practice gratitude.

## An attitude of gratitude can even help:

- Reduce stress
- Improve heart health
- Strengthen the immune system
- Improve quality of sleep
- Maintain healthy habits
- Improve mental health
- Boost self-esteem, and more

## 6 Ways to Practice Gratitude

Want to improve your mood and your health? Take just a few minutes every day to be thankful. Here are six ways to practice gratitude.<sup>1</sup>

### 1 Write thank-you notes

When you receive a gift, someone helps you out, or you want to let someone know you appreciate them, write a thank-you note. The best kind...a hand-written thank-you

note that you drop in the mail or hand-deliver. But you can also give thanks by sending an email, text message or video.

### 2 Keep a gratitude journal

A digital version, or a paper version. It doesn't really matter. Find a way to write down things you're grateful for. And do it often, daily if you can. Instead of trying to write beautiful prose, spend just a couple minutes writing down things you're grateful for. Or just write a list of five things you're grateful for each day.

### 3 Practice meditation

Set aside just a few minutes a day to think about things you're grateful for. Health, family, friends, a job, or even things like food, shelter, and water. Find a place you can relax without distractions. Control your breathing. And focus your thoughts on gratitude.

### 4 Give service

Volunteer. Donate blood. Rake leaves for a neighbor. Help a stranded driver. Or make a meal for a friend. When you give service, you're changing the world for good in a small way. It's also a powerful way to help you recognize things to be thankful for in your own life.

### 5 Compliment others more often

Did your co-worker do a good job on a project or presentation? Are your kids working hard to get good grades? Was the customer service you received outstanding? Be grateful, and compliment others more often for doing their best.

### 6 Pay it forward

Here's another way to show gratitude. Take time to recognize all the good in your life, and then pay it forward. Pay the toll fee, grocery bill, or restaurant meal for someone else. Volunteer at a school, mentor students, or help a child learn to read. Plant a tree, donate funds to a charity, or spend more time listening to people who need someone to talk to.

**When you make the effort to practice gratitude and give thanks,** it changes the way you think. And it can have a positive impact on your health, your outlook on life, and others. What are you grateful for?

Infographic:  
How gratitude  
affects your body  
<https://tinyurl.com/yckum35w>

40 simple  
ways to practice  
gratitude  
<https://tinyurl.com/zb7ajpy>

## References

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