

JUNE 2021 - WEEK THREE - CHIROBALANCE

How Gratitude can boost your Wellbeing and Improve your Life

Dr Matt

Gratitude is simply defined as the state of being grateful. It involves expressing thanks or appreciation for something, from a gift to life itself. It involves recognition of the positive things in your life and how they affect you. This can range from acknowledging a beautiful flower you pass on the sidewalk to the feeling of thanks that comes from recovering from a serious illness.

Gratitude is simply taking time to think about all the positive things in your life. Rather than ruminating on the negatives. It does not necessarily necessitate actually telling anyone else you are thankful for the things they have done. (although, that helps)

Gratitude may be one of the most overlooked tools for increasing happiness. Various research shows it is the single most powerful method of increasing happiness. Having an attitude of gratitude doesn't cost any money. It doesn't take much time. But the benefits of gratitude are enormous.

Positive psychology research has shown that gratitude touches on many aspects of our lives. Our emotions. Personality. Social dynamics. Career success and health. All of these can contribute to increasing our basic happiness.



Research shows that gratitude can:

- Improve your physical health. People who exhibit gratitude report fewer aches and pains, a general feeling of health, more regular exercise, and more frequent checkups with their doctor than those who don't.
- Improve your psychological health. Grateful people enjoy higher wellbeing and happiness and suffer from reduced symptoms of depression.
- Improve your sleep. Practicing gratitude regularly can help you sleep longer and better.
- Increase in mental strength. Grateful people have an advantage in overcoming trauma and enhanced resilience, helping them to bounce back from highly stressful situations.

How can 5 minutes a day have such a large impact?

Gratitude makes us feel more gratitude. It is a positivity loop that increases this feeling over time. This is why a five-minute a week gratitude journal can make us so much happier. The actual gratitude produced during those five minutes is small, but the emotions of gratitude felt during those five-minutes are enough to trigger a grateful mood.

While in a grateful mood, we will feel gratitude more frequently, when we do feel gratitude it will be more intense and held for longer, and we will feel gratitude for more things at the same time.

In five words – gratitude triggers positive feedback loops.



Boosts the immune system

Gratitude has been shown to help contribute to an overall sense of well-being. Stress lowers the immune response to potential bodily threats, whereas increased mental well-being can help your body fight off illness. Practicing gratitude also has the ability to improve other aspects of physical health, with one early-stage 2017 study suggesting it can reduce the risks associated with heart failure.

Improves physical health

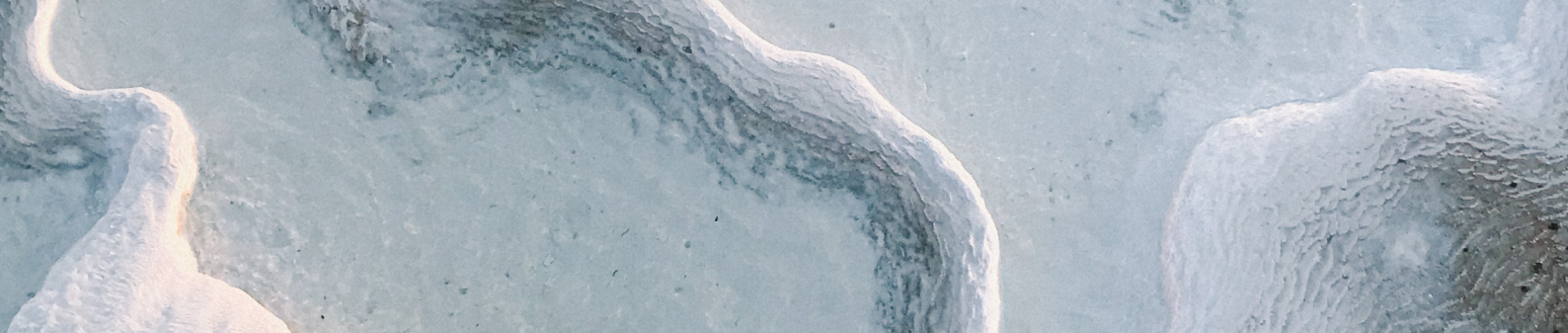
Gratitude improves physical health. Grateful people experience fewer aches and pains and report feeling healthier than other people. Not surprisingly, grateful people are also more likely to take care of their health. They exercise more often and are more likely to attend regular check-ups, which is likely to contribute to further longevity.

Improves mental health

Gratitude is one of many factors that contributes to positive mental health outcomes. One 2020 study showed that regularly practicing gratitude can help ease symptoms of anxiety and depression. Practicing gratitude fosters positive feelings and can contribute to a sense of well-being when done regularly.

Increased optimism

Being an optimistic person can have plenty of health benefits, including healthy aging. If you're not naturally optimistic, gratitude practice can help you cultivate an optimistic outlook. In an 2003 study, it took just 10 weeks of regular gratitude practice for participants to feel more optimistic and positive about their present lives and the future.



There are so many ways to practice gratitude and to find out the practice that suits you best is key. Gratitude is a tool for increasing your overall well-being and only takes 5 mins a day. We all have the ability and opportunity to cultivate gratitude. Rather than complain about the things you think you deserve, take a few moments to focus on all that you have.

Developing an “attitude of gratitude” is one of the simplest ways to improve your satisfaction with life. Making space for appreciation can positively affect your life physically, emotionally, mentally, and spiritually, and those effects might just add up over time. Try out our gratitude journal print out and see how you feel after a week!

References:

- Cregg, D.R., Cheavens, J.S. Gratitude Interventions: Effective Self-help? A Meta-analysis of the Impact on Symptoms of Depression and Anxiety. *J Happiness Stud* 22, 413-445 (2021). <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-020-00236-6>
2021. [online] Available at: <<https://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/sbp/sbp;jsessionid=56elodjf94195.x-ic-live-02>> [Accessed 14 June 2021].
- Kim, E. S., James, P., Zevon, E. S., Trudel-Fitzgerald, C., Kubzansky, L. D., & Grodstein, F. (2019). Optimism and Healthy Aging in Women and Men. *American journal of epidemiology*, 188(6), 1084-1091.
<https://doi.org/10.1093/aje/kwz056>
- Isabel María Salces-Cubero, Encarnación Ramírez-Fernández & Ana Raquel Ortega-Martínez (2019) Strengths in older adults: differential effect of savoring, gratitude and optimism on well-being, *Aging & Mental Health*, 23:8, 1017-1024, DOI: [10.1080/13607863.2018.1471585](https://doi.org/10.1080/13607863.2018.1471585)
- Emmons, Robert & McCullough, Michael. (2003). Counting Blessings Versus Burdens: An Experimental Investigation of Gratitude and Subjective Well-Being in Daily Life. *Journal of personality and social psychology*. 84. 377-89. [10.1037//0022-3514.84.2.377](https://doi.org/10.1037//0022-3514.84.2.377).
- Ryff, C. D., Singer, B. H., & Dienberg Love, G. (2004). Positive health: connecting well-being with biology. *Philosophical transactions of the Royal Society of London. Series B, Biological sciences*, 359(1449), 1383-1394.
<https://doi.org/10.1098/rstb.2004.1521>

PositivePsychology.com. 2021. What is Gratitude and Why Is It So Important? [2019 Update]. [online] Available at: <<https://positivepsychology.com/gratitude-appreciation/>> [Accessed 14 June 2021]. **CHIROBALANCE**



Monday

Tuesday

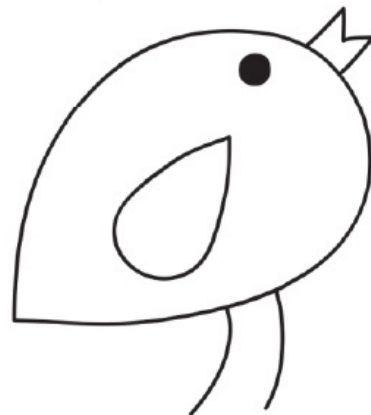
Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

Sunday



Write something good that happened each day