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For a Longer Life, Be Thankful

An "attitude of gratitude" may be a cliché, but the truth is, having one can actually lengthen your life.

As we forge through the hustle and bustle of the season, many families will pause during this time and share something they're grateful for. According to scientists, bringing that Thanksgiving spirit and practice into an everyday habit for the new year can help people live longer and healthier lives. Here are some research-backed reasons for cultivating an attitude of gratitude year-round, and how to commit to the practice.

“Anyone can recognize what's around them and express thanks”

Gratitude Is Powerful

When scientists study the health and longevity benefits of gratitude, they're usually referring to a practice of focusing on what we have, rather than what we don't have. In other words, practicing gratitude means emphasizing what is, rather than what is not. Like a mindfulness practice, a gratitude practice is about bringing our attention to what's around us in a non-judgemental way.

In a recent [study](#) of female nurses between 69 and 96 years old, research found that those who felt gratitude more often had a 9% lower risk of

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Cultivate a Positive Mindset

To be happier, focus on daily habits like practicing gratitude, connecting with loved ones, exercising, spending time in nature, and helping others, while also managing negativity and finding purpose, as happiness is built through consistent small actions that support your mind and body. Try these simple tips:

Practice Gratitude: Keep a journal or simply think daily about things you're thankful for to focus on the good.

Limit Negativity: Challenge negative self-talk and let go of things that don't serve you.

Be Mindful: Savor small moments and pay attention to the good things happening around you.

Forgive: Let go of anger and resentment towards yourself or others.



mortality within three years. That effect emerged after adjusting for other factors like physical and mental health, social connectedness, socioeconomic status, and religion. One of the authors of the study, Tyler VanderWeele, is co-director of the Initiative on Health, Spirituality, and Religion at the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health.

"A nearly 10% reduction in mortality risk is meaningful, but not huge," VanderWeele told [Harvard Women's Health Watch](#). "But what's remarkable about gratitude is that just about anyone can practice it. Anyone can recognize what's around them and express thanks to others for what's good in their life."

Indeed, for such an accessible intervention, gratitude's positive effects on health are pretty amazing. Experiencing gratitude on a regular basis has been shown to support cardiovascular health; in [one study](#), people with a gratitude practice experienced an improvement in symptoms like inflammation, and were more likely to stick to treatment goals. In a [meta-analysis](#) of 64 clinical trials, researchers found that individuals who practiced gratitude had lower rates of anxiety and depression.

Dr. Emiliana Simon-Thomas studies well-being at the University of California, Berkeley. "It is unfair to demand gratitude from anyone if they're feeling particularly impoverished," she said in an interview with [CNN](#). "But it's not unfair to point out some of the simple and easy immediate factors that are actually a source of goodness. It could be the feeling of warm sun through a window on your shoulder...it's just a matter of really noticing that there are things around you, even in moments that are difficult."

How to Cultivate Gratitude Daily

Everyone feels gratitude spontaneously sometimes, but the real health benefits emerge for those who cultivate gratitude with intention. Here are a few ways to practice.

Stopping and Noticing: Like Dr. Simon-Thomas suggests, pausing to notice the goodness in everyday moments is a form of gratitude practice. Any mindfulness technique will bring the same effect. To remind yourself to stop and look for the good, try connecting this new habit with something you already do everyday. For example, instead of using your morning coffee time to doomscroll or watch the news, use that time consistently to pause and notice the good things your senses are telling you. The smell of coffee, the sound of birdsong, the chill of the winter air, the comfort of your favorite chair... all these are available for the noticing.



Member Testimonials

"We travel several times throughout the year and enjoy the security of leaving the Village with no cares about mail, papers, plant care or maintenance while we are gone. Also, I had used my lawn mower and snow blower very effectively over the years, but now I can let somebody else take care of that for me, and I don't miss it at all."

~Dick and Sharon R.

"The co-op makes real sense because you have no worries about safety, security, maintenance, etc. I've visited other Village Cooperatives and was delighted to find that the residents love their new homes. I really don't know what more a person could ask for with this lifestyle."

~Bob H.

QUARTERLYQUOTE

“Feeling gratitude and not expressing it is like wrapping a present and not giving it.”

— William Arthur Ward

Ask Yourself Three Questions: Pick three questions to ask yourself every day to generate a sense of gratitude. What sensations am I grateful for in this moment? Who has given me something recently... a gift, kindness, their time? What is bringing me comfort? What art/book/movie/media gave me happiness today? What am I looking forward to? You might decide to keep a gratitude journal: writing down your answers can help you remember to practice, and re-reading weeks of entries can bring back grateful feelings all over again. It's also fine to simply write the questions on a post-it note and place it in a spot you'll see every day. To improve health and well-being, the important thing is consistency, to build up an orientation of gratitude.

Write a Thank-You Note: When a particular person comes to mind during your gratitude reflection, consider letting them know you're thankful for them by writing a note or email. VaderWeele, one of the recent study authors, [says](#), "I do think writing a thank-you note or gratitude letter gets your mind to dwell on something positive for a longer period, to think more deeply about it, because you have to put it not just in words, but in writing." Plus, "It also deepens the relationship and builds that bond."

Gratitude doesn't cost a thing, and it makes a real difference. This holiday season and beyond, take a few moments out of the busy times to let that gratitude in and see the difference it can make in your life.

Winter Advice: **Best Moisturizers**



As we get older, our skin becomes thinner and dryer. Even people who have never needed to moisturize their skin may find their arms and legs looking a little like shedding snakes, especially as we head into winter. But most of us don't have the wallet for fancy preparations, and who knows if they actually work any better than the stuff at Target?

Some beauty editors who specialize in products for people over 60 give us their tips on the best low-cost options to try:

- True Skin Daily Facial Moisturizer
- Ponds Rejuveness Anti-Wrinkle Cream
- Aveeno Positively Radiant Moisturizer
- L'Oreal Age Perfect Skin Renewal with Rosy Tone Moisturizer
- Cera Ve Face and Body Moisturizer

This should help you head into the new year with healthy, glowing skin!



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