

Thankfulness

As Americans, we really have many reasons to be thankful all year long. While it is easy to get caught up in the lust for more stuff, like a bigger house and nicer car, it is important to remember that we have access to things others don't such as healthcare, fresh clean water, and a roof over our head.

Did you know that a habit of thankfulness—not just one time a year on Thanksgiving—can have many health benefits?

Emotional, Mental and Spiritual Benefits

- Research has shown that thankful people are happier than unthankful people. Why? Because they focus on what is good in their life vs. what is difficult.
- Consistent gratitude and thankfulness gives you more emotional resilience when you face life's challenges.
- Thankful people tend to be less self-focused and more others-focused or God focused. Thankful people tend to criticize less and complain less because they are busy looking for things to be thankful for.
- Interestingly, thankful people tend to support their community—benefitting others.



Physical Benefits

- People who regularly practice thankfulness often have less inflammation and therefore, less pain. All of this can result in an overall stronger immune function.
- People who regularly look for things to be thankful for tend to have fewer (if any) self-destructive behaviors (substance abuse, stress eating, neglecting healthy activity).
- Research has shown that thankful people are more likely to exercise, get regular checkups, and generally take care of their health.
- Studies show that people of all ages who consider themselves thankful have fewer health issues than those who don't. People who expressed thankfulness had fewer headaches, respiratory infections, gastrointestinal issues, and healthier hearts.

Cultivating Thankfulness in Your Daily Life

Did you know that we can actually *choose* to be thankful? Thankfulness is an actual skill we can learn and develop.

Tips to cultivating thankfulness include:

- Keep a journal. Every day, write down one or more things you're thankful for, even for the little things in life. When we start being thankful for even the little things in life, we can more easily notice all the blessings God has given us.

- Express your thankfulness to others. This could be formally or informally...through a card, text, email or in person. Showing others that you appreciate them allows thankfulness and gratitude to grow in your own heart and can make a big difference in somebody's day.
- Most importantly, give thanks to God. When we wake up each morning, it's only because of God. When we take a breath, it's only because of God's will. Each morning, when you wake up, try thanking God for all he has done and continues to do in your life and see what a difference it makes.

Food for Thought:

- *If you were to wake up tomorrow with only the things you thanked God for today, what would you be left with?*
- *It's not happy people that are grateful, but grateful people who are happy.*



<https://twincitiesoutdoors.com/thankfulness/>

<https://www.crosswalk.com/special-coverage/thanksgiving/4-ways-to-practice-thanksgiving-in-your-daily-routine>

