

Monthly Health Challenge™

# Practice Gratitude



## CHALLENGE

Look for ways to give thanks

Quiz: Are You Grateful? Take this mini-quiz to find out if you could benefit from practicing gratitude.

Y N

1.   I spend a lot of time thinking about my problems.
2.   I rarely think about what I'm grateful or thankful for.
3.   I feel unhappy or unsatisfied about some part of my life.
4.   It's hard to think positively when so many bad things happen in the world.
5.   I want more out of life, but I'm not sure how to change my situation.

If you answered "yes" to any of these questions, practicing gratitude can help you. Simple actions like writing in a journal, sending thank you notes, or meditating with a focus on gratitude can improve your outlook on life, improve relationships, help you make better decisions, and improve your mood.

## Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Practice Gratitude."
2. Take action to practice gratitude and be thankful on at least 22 days this month.
3. Keep up this habit for a lifetime of good health.



When California resident and 20-year-old Hal Elrod hopped in his car and headed home, he had a lot to be thankful for. His family cared about him. He had lots of friends. He was quickly rising through the ranks as a successful salesman. And then everything changed in an instant.

**"Yo Pal Hal"** A drunk driver in a truck crossed into his lane and hit him head on at 80 miles per hour. Elrod's car was thrown into oncoming traffic and hit a second time. The impact broke 11 bones in his body, ruptured his spleen, and caused severe nerve damage. When rescue workers pulled him from the wreckage, he bled out and died. It took six minutes to revive him, followed by seven surgeries and a long road to recovery.

### The Power of Gratitude

For six days after the accident, he was in a coma. When he woke up, he couldn't walk, use one of his arms, or remember recent events. And he was in a lot of pain.

But despite all those challenges, he was still grateful. Grateful to be alive, grateful for a chance to see his family and friends again, and grateful to get on with living his best life.

"Gratitude and complaining cannot exist at the same time," says Elrod. "Choose the one that best serves you."

It wasn't easy for Elrod to bounce back from the accident. He faced physical, financial, and emotional struggles. But on days when he couldn't even get out of bed, he realized practicing gratitude was something he could do. It changed his life and helped him write a best-selling book. He has inspired millions of others to practice gratitude.

### What are you grateful for?

Think about it, and then take action. Research<sup>1</sup> shows that practicing gratitude can improve your mood, help you feel better about your life, and have a positive impact on others. Take the month-long Health Challenge and Practice Gratitude.

The importance of gratitude  
<http://tinyurl.com/hx88zqe>

# 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? A recent study<sup>2</sup> found that gratitude can have a positive impact on your mood, well-being, and outlook on life.

Gratitude can even make you more productive and help you perform better. In a separate study,<sup>3</sup> researchers wanted to find out if gratitude would impact performance at a call center. So before the shift started for a group of people tasked with making phone calls to ask university alumni for donations, the manager took a few minutes to say "thank you." And you know what? It did make a difference. The callers felt better. They felt appreciated. They had more confidence. And they made 50 percent more fund-raising phone calls.

Five ways to cultivate gratitude at work [tinyurl.com/kyp3q27](http://tinyurl.com/kyp3q27)

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 your relationships, be 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
- Manage or prevent depression
- And improve self-esteem

## How to Practice Gratitude

Say "thank you." And do it more often, like at home, at work, or even at the store. That's a start, but there are many other ways you can practice gratitude:

### Write thank-you notes.

If your mom made you write thank-you notes after guests attended your party or grandma sent you a birthday check, you already know one way to practice gratitude. When you receive a gift, someone helps you out, or you want to let someone know you appreciate them, write a thank-you note. Mail it or hand-deliver it. To whom? Your mom, co-worker, doctor, or even the clerk at the grocery store. A hand-written card or letter will make a big impact.

GRATITUDE IS THE BEST ATTITUDE!

### 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 a couple minutes writing down things you're grateful for. Or just write a list of five things you're grateful for each day.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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.

### 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?

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

Infographic: Here's how gratitude affects the human body [tinyurl.com/hjcl24g](http://tinyurl.com/hjcl24g)

## References

1. Harvard Health Publications. (2011). In praise of gratitude: Expressing thanks may be one of the simplest ways to feel better. Accessed October 21, 2016, from <http://tinyurl.com/zyq4wlf>.
2. Sansone, R., Sansone, L. (2003). Gratitude and well being: The benefits of appreciation. *Psychiatry*, 7(11):18-22.
3. Grant, A., Gino, F. (2010). A little thanks goes a long way: Explaining why gratitude expressions motivate prosocial behavior. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98(6):946-955. doi: 10.1037/a0017935.





# Practice Gratitude

## Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Record the number of days you practice gratitude.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to make practicing gratitude a regular part of your life.
4. At the end of the month, total the number of days you practice gratitude. You must do this on at least 22 days this month to complete this challenge. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

## CHALLENGE

Look for ways to give thanks

MONTH:							HC = Health Challenge™ ex. min. = exercise minutes	
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	Weight & weekly summary	
HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____		
HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____		
HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____		
HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____		
HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____	HC [ ] ex. min. _____		

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I practiced gratitude

\_\_\_\_\_ Number of days this month I exercised at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

-----  
-----

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



[www.BlueHealthAdvantageNE.com](http://www.BlueHealthAdvantageNE.com)

