



Gratitude

The Benefits and How to Practice It

While it's not always easy, being grateful for the positives in life can have a profound impact on your mood, outlook, and overall well-being. Here's how to increase your gratefulness.

What is gratitude?

Gratitude involves showing appreciation for the things in life that are meaningful or valuable to you. Taking a moment to notice and acknowledge the things you're grateful for each day can brighten your outlook, boost your mood, and help you feel more positive in the face of challenges.

While it's easy to feel a rush of joy after winning the lottery or receiving a big promotion at work, gratitude extends to the smaller blessings in life that are often overlooked or taken for granted. Even the smallest moments, such as a brief chat with a friend, a kind gesture from a stranger, a cool breeze on a hot day, or a peaceful stroll in nature, are things that you can be thankful for.

Whatever your circumstances in life, you may find that consistently showing gratitude can be surprisingly difficult. Many of us get caught up in a negativity bias, where we linger on bad news and unpleasant experiences, yet allow moments of positivity to fade into the background.

Maybe you spend so much time dreading work on Monday that you don't take time to fully appreciate the weekend. Or perhaps you're so focused on your own verbal slip-up at a party that you don't register a compliment from a friend. And if you have a mood disorder such as depression, being able to see any positives or express gratitude can seem impossible.

Fortunately, gratitude is like a muscle that you can build. With the right exercises and practice, you can find at least something small to appreciate in even the bleakest day. The idea of cultivating gratitude might sound cheesy, but research has shown that it can have very real benefits. With these tips, you can use gratitude to uplift your mood, find respite from negativity, foster stronger relationships, and even change the way you view yourself.

Benefits of practicing gratitude

A little gratitude can do wonders for your mood. When you practice gratitude, you shift your thoughts away from negative emotions and uncomfortable sensations. Instead, you begin to focus on good things that you may have overlooked.

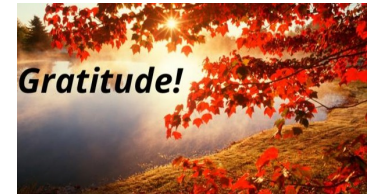
Rather than focusing on the misfortune of having a flat tire, for example, you consider how your job has made it possible to pay for repairs. Or you shift your focus to how fortunate you are to have close friends who are willing to drive you home.

This kind of thinking leads to a release of serotonin and dopamine, chemicals in the brain that are associated with happiness and pleasure. Acknowledging gratitude also decreases stress hormones. The short-term result is a reduction in anxiety and an improvement in mood. In the long-term, regularly practicing gratitude may also lead to lasting changes in your brain, priming you to be more grateful going forward.

Because gratitude can boost your mood, perhaps it's no surprise that it can also improve your overall mental health. As you practice gratitude, you may notice a decrease in symptoms of depression and anxiety. While gratitude alone may not be a magic bullet to mental health issues, it can be one part of a broader treatment plan.



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Approaching life with a more positive mindset can do more than just improve your mood. It can have cascading benefits in other areas of your life, such as:

Better sleep. Some research links increased gratitude with [higher quality sleep](#) and fewer sleep disturbances. This might be because expressing gratitude right before bed allows you to fall asleep with a more positive outlook.

Improved focus. Gratitude might make it easier for you to focus. If you begin to view the task in front of you — whether it's schoolwork or job duties — in a more positive light, you spend less energy feeling stressed about it. You might even begin to view challenges, such as an upcoming exam, as opportunities rather than hurdles. This can improve your [emotional resiliency](#).

Higher self-esteem. Viewing the world with a sense of gratitude can change the way you think about your own worth. Imagine that a friend treats you to lunch. As you express your appreciation, you also begin to realize that your friend is spending time and resources on you because they value you. You then internalize the thought that you're important to others.

Increased patience. The results of 2016 research seemed to indicate that people who regularly express gratitude are more patient. So, if you want to increase self-control and reduce impulsiveness, try practicing gratitude. Other research shows a potential connection between gratitude and other virtues, such as humility and wisdom.

Practice mindfulness

Remembering to slow down and savor little moments in your life can be a way to cultivate gratitude. Tap into your senses and let your mind linger on pleasant, everyday sensations. Focus on the taste of a ripe strawberry, for example, the feeling of the sun on your skin, or the gentle sound of background music. This can help ground you in the present, pulling you away from rumination and worrying.

If you find yourself focusing on the same thing every day, try to home in on different aspects that you appreciate. For example, if you take a walk in the same stretch of the park every day, you might choose to focus on the pleasant sounds of nature one day and the sights the next day.

You can also use more structured meditation practices to tap into mindfulness. Set aside some time to listen to HelpGuide's guided audio mediation, [Gratitude in Difficult Times](#). The meditation guides you through a calming exercise that incorporates both mindfulness and gratitude.

Revisit and reframe past events

Most of us can recall past events that we regret. It could be anything from failing to study for an important test to lashing out at a close friend. Or maybe you regret a poor financial decision or a missed opportunity in dating. Although they may have led to disappointment, shame, or even heartbreak, you've likely also learned something from these experiences.

How did they contribute to your growth? Did they make you more cautious, assertive, or compassionate? By finding lessons within the tough experiences in life, you can cultivate more gratitude. You can even consider combining this with the journaling exercise. Come up with a list of past misfortunes and the lessons you've learned from each.

While these gratitude exercises can give your mood and outlook a welcome boost, it can take time for them to impact your mental health and overall well-being. Be patient and continue practicing gratitude. Turn the exercises into little rituals. In time, you may notice your stress levels drop and relationships strengthen. Then, you'll have even more reasons to be grateful.

High-Fiber Foods That Are Low in Potassium:

A Guide for Kidney Health

Maintaining a diet that is both high in fiber and low in potassium can be challenging, especially for individuals with kidney disease or those managing hyperkalemia. While fiber is essential for digestive health, blood sugar control, and heart health, potassium must be carefully monitored to prevent complications such as irregular heartbeat or muscle weakness.

This article explores safe, fiber-rich foods that are low in potassium, helping you strike the right nutritional balance.

Why Fiber Matters

Fiber plays a vital role in:

- ◆ Promoting regular bowel movements
- ◆ Lowering cholesterol and blood pressure
- ◆ Controlling blood sugar levels
- ◆ Supporting gut health and reducing inflammation



Adults should aim for:

- ◆ **25–38 grams of fiber daily, depending on age and gender**
- ◆ **14 grams of fiber per 1,000 calories consumed**

Understanding Potassium Restrictions

A low-potassium diet typically limits intake to **2,000–3,000 mg per day**, with individual recommendations varying based on kidney function and lab results. Foods with less than **200 mg of potassium per serving** are generally considered low-potassium.

High-Fiber, Low-Potassium Food List

Here are some fiber-rich foods that are also low in potassium:

Grains and Cereals

- ◆ Puffed wheat cereal (3 tbsp): Low potassium, good fiber source
- ◆ Semolina or polenta (1–2 tbsp): Low potassium, versatile for cooking
- ◆ Wholewheat crackers or rice cakes: Moderate potassium, fiber-rich snack



High-Fiber Foods That Are Low in Potassium: A Guide for Kidney Health

Vegetables

- ♦ Celery (½ stick)
- ♦ Green beans (1 tbsp, boiled)
- ♦ Pumpkin (1 tbsp, boiled)
- ♦ Turnip greens (1 tbsp, boiled)
- ♦ Carrots and cauliflower (moderate potassium, fiber-rich)



Fruits

- ♦ Blueberries (½ cup): Low potassium, high in antioxidants
- ♦ Pineapple (canned in juice): Low potassium, fiber source
- ♦ Fruit cocktail (canned in juice): Convenient and low in potassium
- ♦ Apples and pears: Moderate potassium, excellent fiber content

Snacks

- ♦ Unsalted popcorn: Whole grain, moderate potassium
- ♦ Walnuts: Fiber-rich, moderate potassium
- ♦ Whole wheat crackers: Great for fiber, watch portion size



Tips for Increasing Fiber Safely

- ♦ **Start slow:** Gradually increase fiber to avoid bloating or cramps
- ♦ **Watch portions:** Even low-potassium foods can become high-potassium if consumed in large amounts
- ♦ **Leach vegetables:** Boiling and soaking can reduce potassium content
- ♦ **Use canned fruits and vegetables:** Choose options packed in water or juice, not syrup or brine

Balancing fiber and potassium is possible with careful planning. Work with your registered dietitian to tailor your diet to your specific health needs. By choosing the right foods and monitoring portion sizes, you can enjoy the benefits of fiber without compromising kidney health.

Travel Reminder

If you are traveling please remember that we need 3-4 weeks to get your travel arrangements made. If you do have an emergency we are sometimes lucky enough to find a center that works fast on a travel request. For Travel Requests or for more Info please call Kim at 402.489.5339