



# Practice Gratitude

## CHALLENGE

Create daily habits to give thanks

## Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read "Practice Gratitude."
2. Create a plan to practice gratitude daily.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



When the young Hal Elrod hopped in his car and headed home on an ordinary day in California about 20 years ago, 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

at his sales job. And then everything changed in an instant.

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.

## Take the Grateful Quiz

Find out if you could benefit from a gratitude practice.



### 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.

How did you do? 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.

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

5 ways to practice gratitude at work  
<https://tinyurl.com/kyp3q27>



# 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?** Research shows that gratitude can have a positive impact on your mood, well-being, and outlook on life.<sup>2</sup>

Gratitude can even make you more productive and help you perform better.

In a recent study, researchers looked at the power of gratitude for a group of nurses.<sup>3</sup>

Taking care of sick patients is often a stressful and thankless job. It's not uncommon for nurses to experience burnout, health problems or worse. Researchers wanted to find out if gratitude could change that.

For 12 weeks, a group of nurses practiced gratitude and kept track of instances they were thanked by patients or co-workers, or felt grateful.

And you know what? It made a difference. Nurses reported feeling happier. Gratitude helped reduce stress, cut sick days, improve morale, and prevent turnover.

## 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 relationships, feel 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
- Improve mental health
- Boost self-esteem, and more

## 6 Ways to Practice Gratitude

Want to improve your mood and your health? Take just a few minutes every day to be thankful. Here are six ways to practice gratitude.<sup>1</sup>

### 1 Write thank-you notes

When you receive a gift, someone helps you out, or you want to let someone know you appreciate them, write a thank-you note. The best kind...a hand-written thank-you

note that you drop in the mail or hand-deliver. But you can also give thanks by sending an email, text message or video.

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

### 3 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.

### 4 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.

### 5 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.

### 6 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?

Infographic:  
How gratitude  
affects your body  
<https://tinyurl.com/yckum35w>

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

## References

1. Yoshimura, S., et al. (2017). Grateful experiences and expressions: The role of gratitude expressions in the link between gratitude experiences and well-being. *Review of Communication*, 106-118. From: <https://tinyurl.com/39v9pxpz>
2. Stoerker, E. (2021). The science and research on gratitude and happiness. *Positive Psychology*. From: <https://tinyurl.com/yck7i5xa>
3. Starkey, A. et al. (2018). Gratitude reception and physical health: Examining the mediating role of satisfaction with patient care in a sample of acute care nurses. *The Journal of Positive Psychology*, 779-788. From: <https://tinyurl.com/468tmet9>



# Practice Gratitude

## CHALLENGE

Create daily habits to give thanks

### Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, or add to your digital calendar).
2. Create a plan to give thanks and practice gratitude daily.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to practice gratitude.
4. Review your progress at the end of each day, week, and at the end of the month. Then keep up the practice for a lifetime of best health.

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. _____		
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\_\_\_\_\_ 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:

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