

Exercise: Gratitude Journal

A gratitude journal is an exercise that helps you consciously and systematically focus your attention on what is going well. In practice, it means writing down things you feel grateful for.

Keeping a gratitude journal can be helpful for anyone who wants to support their mental wellbeing and build a more positive mindset.

It can also help you better recognise the things that support your wellbeing and find ways to strengthen them.

This exercise usually takes about two weeks or slightly longer, and it is meant to be done every day. First, decide when you will write in your gratitude journal. Choose the writing method and tool that feels easiest for you. For example, you can keep your gratitude journal in the notes app on your phone or computer. The most important thing is that it feels easy and natural to record your observations each day.

1. Writing a gratitude journal

A gratitude journal does not need to be long. It can simply be a bullet-point list of things from the past day that you feel grateful for. You can use the following questions to guide your writing:

- What went well today?
- What positive thing did you notice today?
- Did you receive positive feedback, compliments or thanks from a friend, professor or family member? What kind?
- How did you make progress on something related to your studies or work today?
- Which conversation from the day stayed with you as particularly meaningful? Why?
- What happened to other people during the day that also lifted your spirits?
- How did even a small thing you did have a positive impact on other people, animals, nature or the wider world around you?

2. Reflection

Once you have written in your gratitude journal for the period of time you chose, take a moment to reflect on your thoughts with the help of the following questions:

- What did writing the gratitude journal feel like?
- What kinds of things do you notice coming up in your journal? What themes can you identify?
- What might these things tell you about yourself, your habits or the things you consider important?
- How could you bring more things that make you feel grateful into your everyday life?
- What is the first thing you would like to start strengthening? How could you get started with it? Who could support you with this?