

# Live More Mindfully, Create More Gratitude: Activities & Tips

## Benefits of Mindfulness & Gratitude

For the individual:

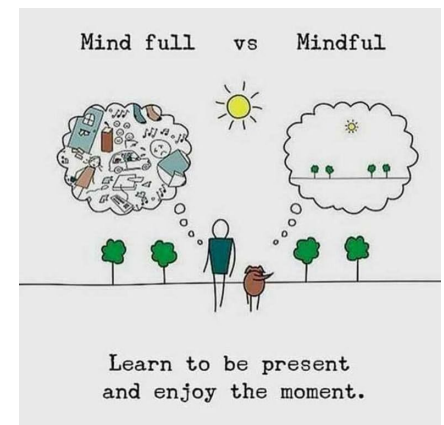
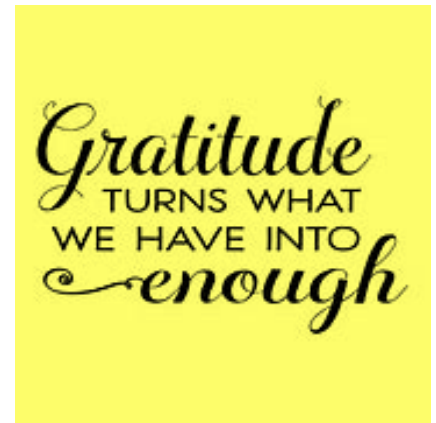
- increased happiness and positive mood
- more satisfaction with life
- less materialistic
- less likely to experience burnout
- better physical health
- better sleep
- less fatigue
- lower levels of cellular inflammation
- greater resiliency
- encourages the development of patience, humility, and wisdom
- less rumination

For groups:

- increases prosocial behaviors
- strengthens relationships
- may help employees' effectiveness
- may increase job satisfaction

(from the Greater Good Science Center, "The Science of Gratitude", 2018)

Mindfulness and gratitude are interconnected. Gratitude allows you to notice your blessings and create balance in life's difficulties, while mindfulness helps you handle tough times with grace and acceptance. Practicing mindfulness can significantly increase the power of gratitude. When we are truly present in the moment, we see the beauty all around us, and the more joy we cultivate, the more we can practice our purposeful awareness and acceptance of the present moment.



Please know, some challenges are larger than these simple gratitude or mindfulness activities. You can't self-care yourself through mental health problems like anxiety or depression or through external factors such as trauma or systemic oppression. If you are struggling with significant challenges the University of Iowa has professional resources to support you. Start here to find resources: <https://mentalhealth.uiowa.edu/>

### **1. Write down at least 3 things you are grateful for. Post these someplace and read them regularly.**

Noting what we're grateful for trains our minds to focus on the positives in life. Our minds like to dwell on all that is wrong (or could go wrong). Experts repeatedly say noting what is positive or writing down 2 or 3 things we are grateful for, increases happiness and reduces stress. Try it and see what happens! It takes very little time.

[https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/ten\\_ways\\_to\\_become\\_more\\_grateful1](https://greatergood.berkeley.edu/article/item/ten_ways_to_become_more_grateful1)

### **2. Complete a routine task, but do it mindfully**

Take note of everything you notice while doing this task. It could be as simple as washing your hands—what do you feel? What temperatures do you notice? What do you smell? Slow down and take all the sensations in. Need more guidance? Check this out:

[Evoking calm: Practicing mindfulness in daily life helps - Harvard Health](#)

### **3. Spend 15 minutes doing something kind or enjoyable for yourself.**

Self-care is important to maintaining healthy relationships with yourself and with others. It means reducing stress by doing things to take care of your mind, body, and emotions. This enhances our ability to live fully, vibrantly, and effectively. The practice of self-care often reminds you and others that your needs are valid and a priority.

Ideally, we're all engaged in regular self-care, doing activities that make us feel cared for mentally, physically, and emotionally. But when we're busy, this doesn't always happen, and we may need to stop and take the time to remind ourselves that we are important, too. Learn more: <https://stopthehurt.org/making-self-care-a-priority/>.

So take 15 minutes to engage in something enjoyable as self-care; try to find those activities that best support you and do them regularly. Here's some ideas if you need them:

- Sit outside and enjoy nature
- Listen to your favorite play list
- Take a soothing shower or bath
- Read just for enjoyment
- Use a foam roller, tennis or other small ball to roll out tight muscles
- Journal
- Plan a trip (even if you can't/won't really go)
- Draw, paint, play music, sing or engage in some other creative activity
- Make a list of your personal strengths
- Wrap up in a favorite blanket and do nothing

- Smooth on lotion
- Find some positive affirmations to post where you can see them often
- Try Kristin Neff's free self-compassion meditations:  
<https://selfcompassion.org/category/exercises/#guided-meditations>

#### 4. Connect with a family member or a friend..

Talking to someone often brings good feelings to both parties. Connecting with others helps us cope with stress, express gratitude, and improves our psychological well-being. Who can you make feel good today – that also makes YOU feel good?

[4 Reasons Friends and Family are Good for Health | Piedmont Healthcare](#)

#### 5. Make a list of 5 activities that bring you joy; do at least one.

Self-care is so important! This is another self-care activity. When you care for yourself, you have more resources for caring for others. Take time today to do notice what brings you joy and do something joyful! See 3 above for ideas or check out these resources for simple ideas:

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/now-is-everything/201106/50-ways-add-joy-your-day>

<https://www.mindfulness-project.org/2020/03/10/bring-more-joy-in-your-daily-life/>

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/money/30-absolutely-free-activities-that-can-make-you-happy-today.html>



#### 6. Go on a walk without listening to music/podcast

When was the last time you went on a walk without listening to music or a podcast, and had no destination in mind? Hear the sounds around you. Smell the fresh air. Maintain awareness of the movement and muscles in your body. What else do you notice?

Check out these tips for a mindful walk: [Mindful Walking: A Simple Step That'll Improve Your Life \(myndlift.com\)](https://myndlift.com/mindful-walking-a-simple-step-thatll-improve-your-life/)

#### More Resources:

<https://www.happify.com/hd/the-6-skills-that-will-increase-your-well-being/>

<https://positivepsychology.com/category/gratitude/>

<https://www.studentsagainstdepression.org/making-changes/the-importance-of-self-care-and-self-compassion/>

<https://www.lifehack.org/articles/communication/40-simple-ways-practice-gratitude.html>

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