

Gratitude Can Improve Your Health

As we enter this busy holiday season, it is easy to forget that not everyone looks forward to the holidays. For many, the stress of reuniting with difficult family members, all the activities and commitments and financial concerns can become overwhelming. This may be particularly true for those who are long distances from loved ones, are limited in their mobility or on tighter budgets. One very common practice during Thanksgiving gatherings – that of expressing gratitude – has been proven to lift the spirits.

The word **gratitude** is derived from the Latin word, **gratia**, meaning *grace, graciousness or gratefulness*. In many ways, the expression of gratitude encompasses all these meanings. Gratitude is a thankful expression of that which an individual receives – both tangible and intangible. With gratitude, people acknowledge the goodness in their lives. In positive psychology research, gratitude is strongly and consistently associated with greater happiness. Gratitude helps people feel more positive emotions, which in turn leads to better physical health, improved relationships and an improved ability to process adversity.

A regular practice of gratitude helps people to refocus on what they **have** instead of what they **lack**. Just as the muscles in our bodies grow stronger with regular use, so does our mental state grow stronger with a regular practice of gratitude.



Methods of cultivating gratitude:

1. Write a thank you note – even if it’s just for a small favor someone did for you.
2. Thank someone verbally. No time to write a letter? A verbal thank you will make your day and the recipient’s as well.
3. Keep a gratitude journal. Make a habit of writing down the things you are grateful for. Then, when you have times that you are struggling, read through your journal. It’s sure to lift your spirits.
4. Make the topic of dinner conversation - ‘Things I am grateful for’.



A perfect opportunity for practicing gratitude is during a Live 2 B Healthy® fitness class. Often, it is tempting to just wish you could be done with the activity and onto something else. When you begin to feel the longing to be done holding a pose or completing a rep, remind yourself to be grateful that you have the **ability to exercise**. Many people do not have the ability (perhaps they are physically unable or they do not live in a location that offers classes) and we can be very thankful that we have been given the opportunity to participate in a Live 2 B Healthy® class.

To locate FREE local senior fitness classes in your area, please visit:

<https://franchise.live2bhealthy.com/class-schedule/>

Enter your zip code to find locations near you.