



Think Positive

CHALLENGE
Train your brain to think positively

Requirements to complete this HEALTH CHALLENGE™

1. Read “Think Positive.”
2. Create your own plan to think positively to improve your life.
3. Keep a record of your completed health challenge in case your organization requires documentation.



Olympic skier Jackie Wiles topped 80 miles per hour on a downhill course in a World Cup Race in early 2018. She hit turn after

turn perfectly using her skis, poles, and body. Within a week, she would race against the best downhill skiers in the world at the Winter Games. And then something happened.

At the peak of her career as a world-class athlete, Wiles lost her balance. She spun out of control and veered off course. When race officials reached her on the snow-covered slope, she couldn't walk. The impact tore ligaments, broke two bones in her leg, and caused other injuries.

Even before surgery, Wiles knew she had a choice. Give up, quit skiing, and do something else. Or focus on getting better and stronger to ski like a pro again. What would you do? Dwell on the negative or focus on the positive?

Positive thinking can actually improve your mood, support good health, and help you live longer. Give it a try. Take the month-long health challenge to Think Positive.

Mindset Matters Quiz: Does positive thinking matter?

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1. People with a positive outlook on life have a lower risk of heart disease than those who focus on the negative.
2. Stress and negative thinking don't really impact blood pressure.
3. A little exercise or meditation can boost your mood and help you feel better.
4. People who focus on the positive tend to live longer and have a lower risk for chronic disease than those who don't.
5. Positive thinking improves brain function, memory, and problem-solving skills.



How did you do? If you answered any of these statements incorrectly, you could benefit from learning more about the power of positive thinking. You can do it. Your mindset can have an impact on your health and happiness.

Answers: 1. True. 2. True. 3. False. 4. True. 5. True.

The Power of Positive Thinking and Your Health

After the ski slope crash, Wiles was taken away on a stretcher. She needed surgery to repair torn ligaments, broken bones, and damage to her knee. Then came physical therapy. Every step of the way to recovery, she's focusing on the positive.

“Scars tell stories and show what I've been through and the strength from within,” says Wiles. “I'm going to come out stronger from this.”

It's good to focus on the positive or look on the bright side, even when things go wrong. It can improve your health and quality of life in many ways, such as:

- ✓ Lower the risk for heart disease¹
- ✓ Help you live longer²
- ✓ Bounce back from negative events faster
- ✓ Improve well-being and quality of life³
- ✓ Support and protect the immune system⁴
- ✓ Reduce blood pressure
- ✓ Help you make and maintain healthy relationships
- ✓ Improve brain function, memory, and problem-solving skills⁵
- ✓ Reduce worry, stress, anxiety, and depression⁶



8 Ways to Think Positive

Are you already an optimistic person? Keep up the good work. But what if you tend to focus on the negative, or catch yourself thinking the worst? Practice positive thinking. Here are some ways to develop a positive mindset:

1. Start your day with positive thoughts.

When you wake up, do you start worrying about everything on your to-do list and what could go wrong? Stop. Start your day with a positive thought like: "Today is going to be a great day."

2. Be grateful. It's another way of saying, "look for the positive." For example, when you're stuck in traffic, be grateful for extra time to listen to your favorite song or podcast.

3. Keep a gratitude journal. Take a few minutes each day to write down a few things you're grateful for. Even little things matter, like clean air, a beautiful sunset, or all green lights on your way to work.

4. Laugh more. It's a great way to boost your mood, feel happier, and be more positive. Read or listen to funny jokes. Watch a comedy. And look for humor, even in difficult situations. When you laugh, endorphins are released in the brain that help improve your mood.

5. Make time for exercise. Aim for 30 to 60 minutes a day. Break it up into smaller chunks of time if that fits your schedule better. Go for a walk. Ride a bike. Hit the gym. Take a fitness class. You'll feel better, think better, and be more positive.



Giving thanks can make you happier
tinyurl.com/yctbfmyd



How to achieve a positive attitude
tinyurl.com/y7cbavlv



16 more ways to think positive
tinyurl.com/y8xc6hgw

6. Learn from failure. When something doesn't turn out the way you expected, it's easy to focus on what went wrong. Change the way you think about failure. Turn it into a learning opportunity. Inventor Thomas Edison said: "I have not failed 10,000 times. I have not failed once. I have succeeded in proving that those 10,000 ways will not work."

7. Stop, think, choose. Pay attention to what you say and think. When you catch yourself making a negative statement or comment, Stop. Think about what you're saying. And Choose to reframe it with a positive statement. Here's an example:
Stop: I'll never be able to eat a healthy diet.

Think: That's not true. I just ate a cookie, but I eat healthy foods, too.

Choose: I'm working on eating a healthier diet. I'll make better choices next time.

8. Surround yourself with positive people. You may not be able to avoid Debbie Downer or Bob Bummer if they're your co-workers or part of your family. But you can surround yourself with positive people. Being around people with a positive outlook will help you learn to think this way, and avoid dwelling on the negative.

Positive thinking won't solve all your problems or turn your life into a magical fairy tale. But it can improve your physical and mental health, help you live longer, and feel happier. And that's something to be grateful for.

References

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6. Eagleson, C., et al. (2016). The power of positive thinking: Pathological worry is reduced by thought replacement in Generalized Anxiety Disorder. *Behavioral Research and Therapy*, 78: 13-18. From: <https://tinyurl.com/y8f5popl>



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Instructions

1. Post this calendar where you will see it daily (bathroom, kitchen, bedroom, etc.).
2. Create your own plan to practice positive thinking habits.
3. Use the calendar to record your actions and choices to think positive.
4. At the end of the month, total the number of days you practice positive thinking habits. You must do this on at least 22 days this month to complete this challenge. 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. _____	
HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	
HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	
HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	
HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	HC ex. min. _____	

_____ Number of days this month I practiced positive thinking habits

_____ Number of days this month I was physically active for at least 30 minutes

Other wellness projects completed this month:

Name _____ Date _____