

# HOW Gratitude AFFECTS THE HUMAN BODY

Cultivating an attitude of gratitude can do more than make you a happier person. It can make you healthier, too. Studies point to a wide variety of medical benefits to maintaining a positive outlook on life.

## Overall Benefits



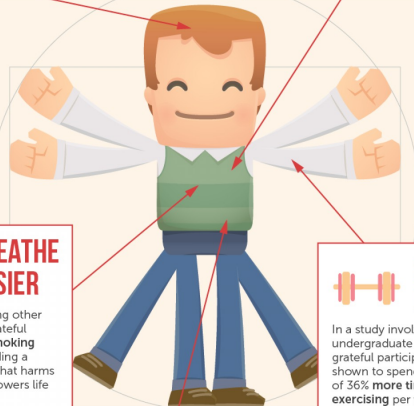
### CALM DOWN

Cultivating gratitude and other positive emotions can **reduce stress hormones** like cortisol by as much as 23%.<sup>1</sup>  
A study of 400 people, 40% of whom had sleep disorders, shows **making nightly lists of things one is grateful for** can also improve the duration and quality of sleep.<sup>2</sup>



### HEALTHIER HEART

Recalling feelings of appreciation<sup>3</sup> and **listing things to be grateful for**<sup>4</sup> can protect the heart by decreasing blood pressure and lowering heart rate variability.



### BREATHE EASIER

In addition to making other healthy choices, grateful individuals **avoid smoking tobacco**, thus avoiding a hard-to-kick habit that harms lung function and lowers life expectancy.<sup>5</sup>



### SLIM DOWN

In a study involving 192 undergraduate students, grateful participants were shown to spend an average of **36% more time exercising** per week and to take **better care of health overall**.<sup>6</sup>



### STRONGER IMMUNITY

Gratitude is linked with optimism, which can improve the body's immune response in certain situations, resulting in an increase in white blood cells needed to fight disease.<sup>8</sup>

## Psychological Benefits



Reduces toxic negative emotions such as envy, resentment, and regret.<sup>9</sup>

Lowers risk of major depression.<sup>9</sup>

Linked to empathy and lower aggression, even when faced with negative experiences.<sup>10</sup>

Can help overcome trauma and improve mental resilience, even during hard times.<sup>11</sup>

Improves self-esteem.<sup>9</sup>

#### SOURCES

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