

How to Be More Optimistic

Tips to Help Keep Your Health On Track!

Are you someone who looks at the glass half-empty rather than half-full? Negative thoughts may affect many facets of your day-to-day life, including your health. An optimistic outlook, coupled with positive thoughts, is important in managing stress. Being optimistic doesn't mean you are not affected by the negative aspects of life; it just means that you are the type of person who tries to handle each situation hoping for the best and not the worst. Even if you are negative by nature, you can learn to be more positive. It begins by changing your thought process with logic and reason, and maintaining thoughts that are more positive than negative. ⁽¹⁾

How positive thoughts benefit your health

Some of the health benefits, both physical and emotional, that a positive attitude may provide are: ⁽¹⁾

- Longer life span
- Less depressed
- Calmer demeanor
- Healthier physical and mental well-being
- Better heart health, lowering risk of death from heart disease
- Stronger coping skills during stressful periods

What are some examples of negative thoughts?

If you have a tendency towards negativity, you may exhibit these types of behaviors: ⁽¹⁾

- **No gray area** – You view things as either good or bad; there is never a gray area. Something is either wonderful or awful.
- **Everything bad is a catastrophe** – The first thing that goes wrong sets the tone of your day. You spill your coffee on your shirt and you immediately decide the rest of your day will be terrible.
- **Self-blame** – If anything bad occurs, your first thought is that you are at fault. For example, you and friends have plans for the evening and, at the last minute, you are told the plans have been cancelled. Your first thought is that no one wanted to hang out with you.
- **Focus on the negative** – In most situations, you only focus on the negatives, rarely on the positives. Regardless of how many accomplishments you experienced throughout your day, by bedtime you are only thinking about how awful your day was.

How can I learn to be more positive?

Anyone can learn to be more positive as long as they are willing to take the time to change how they view things. Some ways you can begin to reverse negative thinking are: ⁽¹⁾

- **Focus each day** – Each day, think about the one main thing that usually triggers your negativity and start there to create a new habit of positivity. Maybe it's when you first wake up or the dread of the work day or aggravation while in traffic; start by focusing on that one thing that sets your negative mood.
- **Re-evaluate yourself daily** – Stop and think about your thoughts. If they are more negative, try and turn them into something more positive.
- **Laugh more** – Try to find humor in everyday situations. Laughter relieves stress which may help you remain more upbeat.
- **Embrace a healthy lifestyle** – Maintain a healthy lifestyle by eating healthy foods and exercising several days per week. This may help you have a brighter outlook on life and be a stress reliever as well.
- **Include positive people in your life** – Surround yourself with positive, supportive people. Negative people help plant the seed of self-doubt, adding to your negativity and stress level.
- **Practice, practice, practice** – Learn positive self-talk by being an advocate for yourself in terms of love, positivity, the good things about yourself, and all of the things you are grateful for. For example, if you say no to something because you have never done it before and you think the experience will be terrible, flip the negative message. Embrace doing it because it's an exciting opportunity to learn something new. The more you continue to switch your negative thoughts into positive thoughts, the more optimistic you may become.

⁽¹⁾ www.mayoclinic.org

This is informational only, not a replacement for the medical advice of your physician.

January 2018