

A Look Inside The Brain During Exercise

There seems to be no end to the benefits of exercise. Humans need to move or else fall victim to what is often referred to as the sitting disease. If the majority of your day is spent sitting, your overall health will suffer, it can lead to weight gain, heart disease, and other serious chronic illness, especially as you get older. Lack of movement can lead to heart attack, stroke, and a general loss in quality of life in our senior years.

Everyone agrees that exercise is physically great for the body. However, did you know that exercise also has a wide variety of benefits for the human brain? What exactly happens in our brains when we exercise to have such an impressive effect on our mental health?

What Actually Happens In The Brain During Exercise

Exercise causes our heart pressure to rise, which sends a signal to the brain that the body is under stress. In response, a protein is released into our body called “brain-derived neurotrophic factor” (BDNF). This protein is thought of as a “reset switch” – it repairs memory neurons, making thoughts seem crystal clear after exercising and putting the body at ease.

Simultaneously, endorphins are released into the brain, which are meant to limit the degree of pain and discomfort associated with exercise, even creating a sense of euphoria. Like BDNF, endorphins are released in response to the feeling of “stress” brought on by exercise. The term, “runner’s high” is the coin phrase used to describe the surge of endorphins during exercise that act as a natural anti-depressant.

The same antidepressant-like effect from a “runner’s high”

results in a reduction in stress level hormones. Additionally, a study conducted in Stockholm showed that running stimulates cell growth in the hippocampus, which is the portion of the brain responsible for memory and learning.

How Our Mind And Body Are Affected

Together, BDNF and endorphins give us a “happy” feeling after exercise. These are somewhat addictive in nature, which is one reason why some people seem obsessed with exercising, although this “addiction” can be a healthy one.

Besides the short-term high from endorphins and BDNF, exercise also has long-term benefits. Studies show that people are happier and more productive throughout the day when they exercise. A Penn State research study showed that people who had worked out within the previous month were happier and more productive at work compared to those who had not exercised (but not quite to the same degree as those who had worked out earlier that day). People who exercise regularly have much better moods than those who don't and retain a stronger sense of calmness throughout the day.

Exercise affects the brain on various fronts. Not only does it increase heart rate that pumps more oxygen to the brain, it also facilitates the release of various hormones that provides a nourishing environment for the growth of brain cells.

Research conducted at UCLA showed that working out stimulates the growth of new neuronal connections in a variety of important cortical areas of the brain.

How To Maximize The Benefits

20 Minutes

Based on this information, you might think that professional athletes are the happiest people on the planet. According to research conducted by the Department of Exercise Science at

the University of Georgia showed that only 20 minutes of exercise is needed to reach that peak level of productivity, positive mood, and facilitates information processing and memory functions. The key is to turn it into a habit.

Mental And Physical Connection

There is an important mental and physical connection that can increase the benefits of exercise. For example, exercise that integrates different parts of brain activity, such as ballroom dancing that requires rhythm, strategy, coordination and thoughtfulness in movements stimulates cognitive health more than less complex workouts like running or cycling that do not necessarily engage diverse mental abilities.

Adding Exercise To Your Life

Working out in the morning before work or school helps to spike brain activity, prepares you for stresses you may incur during your day, allows for increased retention of new information and learning, and equips you to cope with complex situations that may arise.

Start-off easy – even just 5-10 minutes a day – and gradually increase the length and intensity of your workout. Going to a group or class at the gym makes exercising more fun, and it's a great way to learn new techniques and to meet new fitness minded people.

However, getting motivated to go to the gym regularly can be a challenge, so try different exercises at home and outdoors in your neighborhood, such as jogging, biking, strength training, etc. Variety is the spice of life, and the more you vary your routine the better for your motivation and your body.

There are many apps on your smartphone that can provide you with workout sets for all experience levels and even guide you through the exercises. Furthermore, apps like Map My Fitness and Nike enable you to track your progress, which is a great

way to stay motivated as you watch yourself improve.

Final Thoughts

Remember, the health of your mind and body are closely connected, and exercise is one of the best – if not *the* very best – ways to improve mental and physical health in both the long-term and short-term.

The long-term benefits of exercising regularly are immense – reduced risk of disease, improved mental health, stronger body/muscles, reduced stress, improved digestion, improved blood circulation, and much more.

Even just going on a 20-minute daily walk is immensely better for you than staying sedentary. Find a training partner, set a schedule, do whatever you have to do to get those endorphins and BDNF proteins pumping as often as you can!

Improve Your Productivity and Focus with an Organized Space

Do you feel like you just can't focus enough to get anything done? Your clutter could be part of the reason why. When you're surrounded by excessive objects, knick-knacks, and things you simply don't use anymore, it's difficult to feel truly serene in your own space. That, in turn, makes it difficult to get into a flow state and do effective work. Here are four reasons why clearing out your clutter will bring about an improvement in your mental clarity and ability to get things done.

When Your Surroundings are Clear, Your Mind is Clear

People tend to thrive in clean, spacious, organized environments. It's hard to relax and feel good in a room that's cramped and jumbled with odds and ends. Clutter isn't just unsightly – it's stressful, and it takes up your mental bandwidth, whether you realize it or not. Cleaning up allows you to get into a truly relaxed and focused state of mind.

Say Goodbye to Clutter and Goodbye to Mind Stress

When your space is cluttered, your life can feel a little out of control. It's easy to lose important things, like that bill you need to pay this week, in piles of other stuff if you aren't organized. Paring back your belongings and keeping them neatly sorted will help you find everything you need, right when you need it.

Getting Rid of Clutter Can Improve Your Health

When you take the time to tidy up your house regularly, you're more likely to make the effort to take care of your body as well. In part, this is because decluttering puts you in a positive, can-do frame of mind that carries over into other areas of your life. It's also because people tend to feel more positive and have more energy when they spend time in clean, non-cluttered environments. When your surroundings make you feel better on a day-to-day basis, you'll be more likely to make the effort to exercise and cook healthy meals instead of ordering takeout and watching TV.

Staying on Top of Clutter Gives You a Sense of Control

Being a control freak gets a bad rap, but the truth is that humans need a sense of control over something to be happy. Of course, that doesn't mean you should try to control everything around you, but you can definitely control the clutter levels in your house, car, and office. You'll likely find that keeping your personal space clear and clutter-free gives you a

sense of happiness and pride.

Decluttering is popular for a reason: it's an effective technique for improving your life in a number of ways. One major benefit of decluttering is that it can help you focus better. When you make decluttering a regular part of your life, you'll probably find yourself getting more done at work and adopting healthier habits at home. Your surroundings influence your mind, so why not declutter to set yourself up for success?

Organizing your home can also help you manage your stress!

Once a room in a home is decluttered, peaceful energy surrounds the entire space. Decluttering the home is one of the best things you can do to reduce stress. It is an opportunity to live in a space that sets the whole family up for success. Imagine living in a home that is tidy, organized, clean, and things no longer get lost. The following tips and information will explain more about the benefits of decluttering and how it can help you and your family experience increased productivity and less stress.

The Benefit of a Productive Morning Routine

Going through a typical morning routine in a home full of clutter is extremely difficult. It is challenging to find clothes, car keys, important documents, and a clear path from room to room. Imagine a stress free morning routine that includes access to the perfect outfit, the car keys are ready to go with your important documents, and all the floors are clutter free.

The Benefit of Saving Time and Money

A clutter-free home will help your family to know exactly where everything belongs. You will no longer buy something and then return home to discover you already have four of the exact same item. This is important because it will save you quite a bit of time and money. When the home is cluttered it

creates quite a bit of stress because it takes so much extra time to find things. After decluttering the home, it will be easy to quickly find specific items because they will always be in the right room and the right place.

The Benefit of Increased Focus

In a home full of clutter, it is very difficult to focus on important projects and to complete simple tasks. When the home is a mess, and closets are full of clutter, it is difficult to keep the mind focused on tasks for long periods of time. A cluttered home leads to a cluttered mind and you may find yourself going from room to room and never accomplishing anything. Once the clutter is gone, your mind is free to focus on something else and productivity will increase significantly.

Stress-Free Way to Start Decluttering your Home

Now that you understand more about the health benefits of living in a stress-free and decluttered home, it is time to take action. The first step is to schedule the time to declutter and make it a priority. Get the family involved and create a consistent routine while going through each room in the home. It is helpful to create a system that will make the process go smoothly. The system should include a designated spot for items that will be sold, donated, or thrown away.

Now is the perfect time for you to create a vision of living in a clutter-free and stress-free home. Create simple systems and routines for the entire family to follow and soon everyone will experience the benefits of extra time, increased focus, and less stress.

Enroll now in a 4-week course to Declutter Your Life – get weekly motivation including checklists and worksheets to clear up your personal spaces as well as your mental space!

Ready to Declutter Your Life?

What Are Morning Pages?

Journaling can be an amazing tool for self-development. But if you're a perfectionist, building a journaling habit can be difficult. Maybe you've tried journaling before, but you wanted to edit everything you wrote, so you gave up. Or maybe you're afraid to "ruin" a perfect blank notebook by filling it up with your thoughts. Sound familiar? If so, an approach called morning pages might be exactly what you need to start journaling without self-criticism or anxiety.

Morning Pages: The Basics

Morning Pages were first popularized through Julia Cameron's book *The Artist's Way*. The morning pages approach to journaling is very simple: just write three pages every morning. You can write anything you want – the idea is to capture your stream-of-consciousness inner monologue shortly upon waking. If you don't know what to write, then you can write about having nothing to say. There are no right or wrong topics. Morning pages are about getting your self-critical mind out of the way and *just writing*.

Morning pages are for your eyes alone. They don't have to be well-written. Spelling mistakes, grammar errors, and awkward turns of phrase are all fine. When you do morning pages, you give yourself permission to write messily and imperfectly. It's also okay if your pages are repetitive and boring sometimes. You'll probably come up with more to say than you think you will, but there's no need to put pressure on

yourself to come up with brilliant insights every day.

The Benefits of Morning Pages

Writing morning pages might seem like a tedious chore at first, especially if you're not used to writing in a journal regularly. But this simple habit has a lot of benefits packed into it.

First and foremost, morning pages put you in touch with your inner self. As we get older, many of us start tuning out our inner voice, and this can make it harder to live in an authentic way. When you start writing daily morning pages, you might discover some emotions, attitudes, and desires that you didn't know you were holding onto.

Writing morning pages also helps you clear your mind. If you keep your innermost self pent up all the time, it's easy to get overwhelmed by mental "junk." Writing every day helps you clean out the junk and focus on what's really important to you. This, in turn, can lead to better decision-making.

Finally, writing morning pages helps you move towards your goals. When you start the day by reflecting on your deepest dreams and wishes, you'll be less likely to procrastinate. You'll also be more likely to push yourself out of your comfort zone.

How to Make Morning Pages Work for You

Want to try writing morning pages for yourself? Here's how you can build the habit successfully – and make it stick.

Try to write every day, around the same time. This gets you into a good habit of writing morning pages.

Always write with pen and paper, and never your computer.

Getting in the habit of real handwriting will help you go deeper into yours thoughts.

Set a timer or choose the number of pages you want to write. It is okay to be flexible, based on your schedule.

Morning pages can be a great tool for gaining personal insights and improving your life. If you're intrigued by the idea of keeping a journal, why not give morning pages a try?

Using Mind Mapping to Reach Your Goals

If you have ever been in the middle of a project, task for a client, or trying to organize the household budget and you can't seem to focus then you have experienced the need for mind mapping. Mind mapping helps you take your jumbled mess of thoughts and organize them visually to help you focus on the task at hand and get to where you need to be with the task. If you have never used mind mapping, here are a few techniques and information about the process to help you get started.

Connecting the Chaos

One of the key benefits to using mind mapping techniques is to connect the chaos. Often times the chaos that seems unconnected actually is. For example, you may be thinking about the PTA meeting you have the next day, but you are also thinking about your kids soccer practice alongside grocery shopping and dinner. Though this may not seem like a huge project to most people, to a busy parent it can be uncontrolled chaos. Mind mapping helps you start at the center goal and work your way out, the whole time connecting the

different aspects of your points of focus so you have a clear goal, starting, and ending point. You can see how your kid's appointments now connect to the PTA meeting.

Starting the Path

You may already know how things connect and what your end goal is. The problem for most people is getting started. When you do mind mapping, you can see where you normally would have started and work your way back from that point until you get to a more logical starting point. For example, you may know that your end goal is to produce a website for a client that allows for appointment scheduling. You may think that your starting point would be to just start with the basic template. With mind mapping you can discover that a more logical place would be to start with asking what type of scheduling and if drop down menus or fill in the blank are the best options for your client. This saves time that would have normally been spent reworking what you started with instead of starting where the client's needs are based.

Finding a Goal

Sometimes you know what you want to do, but you don't know exactly what the end goal needs to be to call the project complete. Your mind mapping can help with this. It can also help you develop a clearer path to that goal and a goal that is healthier and produces more happiness for you than you first imagined. You can see where the path is taking you and how the path may continue beyond your original thoughts.

You can use mind mapping for any task that you have. Don't forget that mind mapping is not a set in stone method. If you need to adjust it or work on it, you can. You can adapt it to your new goals, changes, and what you need. It is to help you work out your chaos, not add to it.

Buy Now



Learn Breathing Exercises to Help With Anxiety

When you have to deal with social situations, anxiety can make the experience debilitating.

One way to relax before these types of situations is to learn breathing exercises. This is when you use deep breathing as a way to relax and de-stress before something fearful or that causes anxiety.

The Basics of Deep Breathing

What is deep breathing is and how it can help you?

It may seem simple since breathing is something you do without realizing it constantly, but deep breathing is a little different. It allows you to focus on each breath as you exaggerate inhaling and exhaling. This can help with so many things, from helping to stop a panic attack, to relaxing you before doing something you are fearful about. It gives you something else to focus on, not to mention how much stress it can relieve. There isn't really a right or wrong way to do it, as long as you are breathing in and out and focusing on the breaths while forgetting about the worries in your mind.

You may want to sit up on a chair, without leaning back, and count your breaths 1) inhale 2) exhale 3) inhale 4) exhale, etc. If you like to close your eyes, you can, but it is

absolutely not necessary. The counting gives you something to put your attention on and you can do this throughout the day and keep track of in a journal. Practicing deep breathing in advance of a stressful situation will actually help you get through that situation with more ease. You can use the deep breathing secretly in a social setting to keep you calmer and more in control of any raising anxiety.

Simple Breathing Exercise

Here is a simple way to start deep breathing. Sit in a comfortable spot to practice deep breathing, preferably where you are alone and won't get a lot of distractions. Close your eyes and inhale a deep breath. Focus on the inhaling, from the sound it makes to how it feels in your chest and lungs. Hold the breath for 5 seconds, then release and focus on exhaling. Make it loud and exaggerated if you need to do that to relax, and focus only on the breathing. Do this back and forth for a few minutes.

After you have completed the exercise, check in with your body and mind and notice if you feel differently. Do you feel a greater sense of calm?

Incorporating Meditation

Deep breathing is used in many different practices, including yoga and meditation. Meditation is also great for social anxiety, so it is a good idea if you can start your breathing exercises while also learning to meditate. During deep breathing, you are focusing only on your breaths, so that you are beginning to clear your headspace. This is also how you start learning how to meditate, so you can do both practices at the same time.

Try to breathe in deeply and empty your mind of all your worries and fears, and you will notice that your anxiety begins to reduce and you can handle more social situations. Don't get upset if your mind goes racing when you first start to meditate. It is perfectly natural for your mind to wander, to think about all the things you have to do today, or tomorrow, or what you "should" have done yesterday.

If you are really bothered by the thoughts that arise, tell yourself you will make a list when you open your eyes. Chances are you'll forget most of them by the time the timer goes off. But if you do remember, just make a list when you are done meditating.

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If you would like to learn more about incorporating meditation into your life, you may like to watch my video "[Making Time for Meditation](#)" on YouTube (a Live video on Facebook from an event on the closed FB Group [Transformation Society](#)). In it you'll get to experience three different meditation techniques.

Journal for Positive Thinking

As you know, if you are following along with our [Positive Thinking Challenge](#), a journal is an amazing tool to use for thinking more positively. It isn't just great for gaining more clarity and venting your frustrations, but for your journey to being a more positive person as well.

Keep reading to learn about all the reasons why you using a journal will help to increase your positive thinking.

You Can Reframe Your Negative Thoughts

First of all, you will use the journal to help reframe your thoughts into more positive ones. This is one of the biggest hurdles of thinking more positively, since you can't control negative things that happen in your life. Almost every day, unexpected events will transpire that might put you in a funk, make you feel sad or frustrated, or just really affect the day you had planned out for yourself.

While you can't control these events, you can control how you deal with them. You can use your journal to write down your negative thoughts, then look at ways to make them positive. My article [Turning Negative Into Positive When You Have a Bad Day](#) explains this in more detail. .

You Find Out Why You Have Negative Thoughts

As you begin journaling all your thoughts and feelings, you will also discover why it has been hard for you in the past to have more of a positive mindset. There are often patterns in the more negative things you talk about, whether they are all related to goals you haven't achieved, your work or school life, or even specific people in your life.

It is important to be open and honest in your journal, because that is how you will understand more about yourself and where your frame of mind comes from. By understanding WHY you have negative thoughts, you are able to make changes in your life to be a more positive person.

It Helps You Be More Grateful for the Good in Your Life

Journaling for positivity is a great tool because you can express gratitude. Being more grateful is all about understanding the good things in your life, whether it is your health, people, or where you live and work, and appreciating it. You can write down one thing to be grateful for each day in your journal, which immediately puts you in a better mood and helps you to think more positively.

3 Easy Meditation Techniques

Look all around you, distractions abound everywhere.

Never mind what's going on in our heads.... let alone feelings, emotions, reactions. Or influences like competition, jealousy, and other negative thoughts. For these reasons alone, a meditation practice is practically essential.

Doing more, being more, achieving more, leads to a stress-filled lifestyle, with ever increasing stress levels which can result in heart problems, hypertension, among other ailments. Relaxation is exactly what the doctor should be ordering!

Relaxation can be achieved through meditation. What? Something so simple?

Yes! BUT! To be most effective, meditation is best performed on a regular basis and with an intentional mind.

Meditation practice has been around for thousands of years. Over time and through science, it has been shown to be an effective way to balance one's physical, emotional, and mental well being. Different forms of meditation have well-known physical, psychological, and spiritual health advantages.

Among these advantages are enhanced focus, relaxation, and a more profound understanding of yourself and others.

If you aren't sure which type of meditation technique to try first, read these brief descriptions so you can find the method that most resonates with you, and begin with closing your eyes for just a few minutes.

Traditional Meditation

A study of the different types of meditation techniques has to start with traditional types of meditation. This type has been around for many decades. Traditional meditation is what a lot of people think about when they think of meditation. In this type, the meditator focuses on a mantra, an object, a scripture, image, or a bodily function such as their breathing or heartbeat or movement. When the mind wanders, the meditator brings their attention back to the focus of the meditation. This form of meditation requires a long time to master the deeper levels.

Binaural Meditation

The idea behind binaural meditation is that you listen to sounds being offered to your ears in stereo. In most cases, this technique is done with a set of headphones so that each ear can receive different signals. The two signals resolve to a frequency that induces a meditative state in the listener. This method can trigger a meditative state that usually only comes with many years of practice using traditional meditation, even for a beginner. Binaural audio recordings can be found online.

Guided Visualization

A lot of people have heard of this form of meditation technique. With guided visualization, the focus is on the sound of a voice as it guides you through the meditation. When listening to a recorded guided visualization, this is usually paired with a soundtrack of some kind, often music, rain or waterfalls, ocean waves, or a combination. The soundtrack adds to the relaxation and the guide assists you get through to more profound levels easier than if you were meditating alone.

There are many other types of meditation techniques, and it is possible to combine different types of meditation, such as doing a guided visualization while also concentrating on breathing. Don't overthink getting started with meditation... very basically, you can just close your eyes for a few minutes and try to think of nothing. If your mind wanders, just come back to nothing, again, and again.

Relaxation: Ultimate Relief For Your Hectic Life

Do you schedule down time for relaxation in your life? No? Then something seriously needs to change. If you view relaxation as a waste of productivity hours, you have no idea what you're missing.

Not only should relaxation be mandatory, but regularly scheduling breaks for yourself will actually improve productivity over the long haul, as you are able to fully dedicate your time and attention to your work when you resume.

Need to be sold to why you need relaxation in your life? Then

read on, reader!

Relaxation Boosts Your Immune System

When you lead a busy life, chances are you don't take good care of your health. The result may end up being the exact opposite of what you wanted – sick days that leave you unable to do anything but lie in bed. Luckily, some regularly scheduled time for rest&relaxation can offset this. We all have hectic periods of our life, but the important thing is to deprogram.

Crazy hectic lives that cause sleep deprivation and high stress is manageable up to about 3 months, but maintaining such a schedule longer than that results in a deterioration of health as your body just can't keep up. Try by starting to take one day off a week from work or other draining commitments. Or try sleeping in one day a week. Your immune system will feel the benefits of this "down time" and will be better able to defend your body.

Relaxation Improves Your Working Memory

The longer you work at a high intensity, the poorer your working memory becomes. You will find yourself making silly mistakes, or getting a little too forgetful for comfort. Even short periods of high stress affect the memory centers of the brain, which is noticeable how forgetful you become when under pressure.

Relaxation allows cortisol levels to return to baseline, as there are no pressing matters for you to deal with. Chronically high levels of stress that result in constant streams of cortisol coursing through the body may also contribute to the development of Alzheimer's disease over many years, as it is known to have a strong inflammatory component.

Relaxation Restores The Motivation Centers Of The Brain

Do you ever notice how your drive to do work decreases significantly after doing it repetitively for a period of time? In fact, under the prolonged influence of stress, the motivation center of the brain becomes desensitized to dopamine, limiting your ability to feel motivated, or experience pleasure.

This also explains why you have no desire to eat, and may resign yourself to hopelessness. Luckily, a well-timed break for relaxation will recharge your batteries. Just keep in mind that there is just so much you can handle under pressure, everyone has a breaking point-don't wait to find out what yours is.

Relaxation Keeps Your Heart Healthy

People don't appreciate the danger that running a hectic life can pose to your heart, sadly until it is too late. Not taking time off to relax increases your risk of high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke to name a few. Plus, cortisol results in greater retention of sodium and water, putting the heart and blood vessels under stress to pump and move blood.

Relaxation is well established to reduce blood pressure, decrease your risk of stroke by promoting vasodilation, and decreasing inflammatory processes in blood vessels.

Relaxation Will Keep You Young

Running a hectic life day after day is the surefire recipe to run you down fast. The greater the impact of the hormones cortisol and adrenalin, the harder and faster your body works to regenerate cells. This faster turnover of cells causing hastened aging, and cuts down your youth. This is why it is important to live while you're young- go on vacations, and throw your feet back and just relax. Work will still be there tomorrow waiting for you, so take your time.

Relaxation Resources:

Ready to Take Action to Relax AND Love Your Life?

[Learn How](#)

Improve Your Journaling Skills

Journaling is one of those activities that comes with a long list of benefits and that is easy to get excited about, but difficult to keep up with. The most important thing to keep in mind when it comes to writing in a journal is that there are no rules – you can do it how you want, when you want, and where you want.

This article will guide you through some simple steps for journaling more often and actually finding a way to enjoy it. As you know, motivation is temporary, so you can't count on motivation alone to journal on a daily or regular basis. What you need is to find reasons why you want to journal and really fall in love with the activity.

This method is through seven basic tips and suggestions that will help you think outside the box when it comes to journaling, and find new ways to inspire yourself to write in your journal.

1. Find Your Purpose for Wanting to Journal

The first part of journaling more often and actually enjoying the practice is to re-envision what your main reason is. Keep in mind this can change over time, and most likely will. But it is good to have the purpose written down for wanting to journal, and to keep revisiting it whenever you need to.

Why is this Important?

The main reason behind you wanting to journal is going to be different from other people, so the first reason it is important is because you need to know why YOU are journaling. Some people want to vent their frustrations, other people like to use their journal to work on personal goals, to dump out all their thoughts and feelings, or to find more about themselves.

Sometimes there are more specific reasons for journaling, like keeping a gratitude journal or an art journal. It doesn't matter what your purpose is, as long as you are honest with yourself about why you want to write in a journal. This is where you are really going to feel inspired to use it more regularly.

Figuring Out Your Motivation

Motivation doesn't last forever, but it is great when you are first starting journaling, or when you take a break and want to get back to it. If you are currently struggling with that little push to get started, then you need to figure out your motivation by thinking about your reasons for wanting to journal in the first place.

Sit down and write a list of all the reasons you want to write in a journal. They can be anything you think of, but here are a few ideas:

- To find more clarity.

- For the health benefits.
- You need a good distraction.
- You want to relieve stress from your life.
- To start a gratitude practice.
- To vent in a safe, private place.
- For your new morning routine.

These are just a few reasons out of MANY that you can come up with for wanting to write in a journal. It can also be because you were gifted a journal, or your therapist suggested it.

Make This Your First Journal Entry

Where to write this list? Right in your journal! Make it one of the first pages of your journal so that you can it whenever you open it up, and can easily add to it whenever you find a new reason for wanting to journal.

2. Experiment with Your Journaling

The next step in this method to journaling more often and improving your skills is to mix it up a little. This is when you are going to experiment with when, where, and how you write in your journal. It can make a big difference when you are writing with a different mood or different time of day than you typically would, and can actually impact how much you enjoy writing and what you get out of journaling.

Here are a few ideas:

Write While in a Different Mood

Do you find that you only write in your journal when you are

in a certain type of mood? Maybe you prefer writing when you are in a happy mood, or are the opposite and like to write in your journal when you are upset and want to vent.

Think about what mood you are in when you typically write in your journal, then switch it up. If you write when you are happy, try writing when you are upset or just had a stressful or frustrating day. If you usually vent in your journal on bad days, then choose a really good day and write in your journal.

You will be amazed by how different your writing can be, and might even enjoy it a little more.

Switch Up Your Writing Conditions

Where you write can also have an impact on your writing style and what you get out of the experience. Many people choose to write in their journal at home, such as in their bedroom or home office. If you always tend to gravitate toward a certain writing condition, why not switch it up?

You can take your journal outside and write on your back patio, or even take it on a walk and when you take a break while sitting on a bench, write a few pages of your journal. You can also try heading to a local café or coffee shop and write there.

Your environment can also change your mood and what you write about. It is good to be diverse in how and where you write until you find whatever feels more comfortable for you.

Try a Different Time of Day

You might also want to try writing during a completely different time of day. Experiment with different parts of the day, from writing in the morning, to writing in the evening.

If you have an early morning or afternoon break from work, get out your journal and jot down how your day is going so far.

The great thing about this is that it helps with the other experiments, such as writing in a different mood or a different place than you typically would.

3. Use Unconventional Journaling Tools

Being more creative with your journaling is a great way to inspire you, keep you motivated, and make it fun. This is another big part of this method to journaling more often and getting more out of it. In this section, we are talking about what you actually use to write (or draw) in your journal, aside from the basics.

Changing Your Main Writing Tool

To start with, you can try writing with another tool, even if it is still a normal writing tool. For example, if you have a favorite pen you always tend to use for writing, switch it out for something else. This can be a gel ink pen instead of ballpoint, using a pen with different ink, or writing with a regular pencil instead of a pen and vice versa. Just try using something you wouldn't normally write with to have a different type of journaling experience.

Colored Pencils, Markers, and Crayons

The next step is to get something you would never have thought to write with, starting with your art supplies. If you are an avid adult coloring book user, then you probably have some colored pencils lying around. Use them to write with in your journal! This adds a little color and allows you to get into a

different headspace. It can really change how you write and what you write about just by changing what you write with.

Some other ideas include using markers you have lying around, or even crayons. That can be fun, and you can turn it into a type of themed journal entry where you use crayons when writing about your childhood.

More Unconventional Writing Tools

If you want to take this one step further just for fun and to see what happens, get something else that you can write with. This might be another type of art supply, like charcoal or Indian ink, or even grabbing an eyeliner you don't use anymore and writing with it. Adding more interest and creativity to your journal writing can really help you find brand new inspiration, and give you more reasons to write regularly.

4. Don't Shy Away from Fantasy

Journaling can take many different forms, with practically an unlimited of topics to write about. While many people choose to write about their day, express their feelings, and discuss things happening in their life, this isn't the only thing you can write in your journal.

There are also ways to incorporate more creative writing into your journal, including dreams, fantasies, and even make believe. Here are a few ways to include some fantasy in your journal entries to make it fun:

Write a short story

To start with, you can write a short story in your journal. This can be as short as you want, from a few paragraphs to briefly describe something that happens to a single character, to a few pages long in more of a typical short story.

This benefits you in a few different ways. It first allows you to step outside of whatever stressful situation is in your real life and live in a fantasy world for a while. It also helps you to channel your imagination and see what type of story you can come up with. If you are interested in creative writing, it can be a short practice to try in your journal whenever you have hit a block in your novel.

Explain your dreams

You can also incorporate some of your own reality in the journal entries. For example, if you have a vivid dream at night and want to explore what actually happened, write it in your journal! Describe it in as much detail as you remember, then add little notes about what you think it meant.

Explore your fantasies

Everyone has fantasies in their mind of what they want to happen, what they like to dream about in the silence, or what they think about when they close their eyes. Think of one of your fantasies, whether completely unrealistic or not, and write about it.

When you do this, you can learn a lot about yourself. You understand what are the most important things to you, what your life might be missing, and what types of life aspirations you have. You just have to read between the lines.

Describe your past life

Do you ever think you lived a past life before? Have you envisioned who you might have been or what you did? Explore that a little in one of your journal entries. Maybe you have thought about it before and feel like based on who you are now, you must have gone through certain things.

This can also be a good creative writing practice to get you thinking about what you could have been and coming up with an entirely different life you could have led.

5. Stop Setting Writing Limits

Part of this method to journaling more and improving your journaling skills is to stop setting limits on yourself. These might be good when you just want to start writing in a journal and aren't sure which direction to go, but as you start writing more in your journal, you need to be a little more lenient with yourself.

It is hard to really find clarity and benefit from journaling if you don't allow yourself some breathing room. There should be room for experimentation, trying new things, and exploring what is deep in your subconscious.

Here are some common journaling limits and rules that you can feel free to ignore:

- How long you have to write each journaling session.
- Filling out a certain number of pages each day.
- Having to write every single day.
- Only writing at the same time every day.
- Writing in only one type of journal.
- Using only a pen for writing in a journal.
- Writing text only.

- Having to use prompts regularly.
- Writing about your feelings.

As you can see, you may have of limitations you didn't even think about. Do you have a goal of writing a page every day? This is a good goal, but it can keep you from longer writing because once a page is filled up, you feel like you need to stop. This is why you should be as lenient as you can when it comes to your own journal writing.

6. Write About What Scares You

For this last section of the method to journaling more, we are going to talk about writing about what scares you. This is actually a common tip given to beginner writers who want to write a novel or do other types of creative writing.

Writing about what scares you allows you to face your fears, and really understand more about what you are most fearful of. This can be a traditional scary story, a scenario you are terrified of, or even something that happened to you, that still gives you anxiety.

It is a challenging writing practice that not only requires you to admit what you are afraid of and actually face it in detail, but to find a conclusion or resolution to it.

There are a few ways to do this in your journal, including:

- Writing a short story about something that scares you.
- Talking about the scariest thing that has ever happened to you.
- Writing a journal entry about what you are afraid might happen.

This “fool-proof” method offers you a lot of options as far as writing in your journal goes. It not only helps you journal more often, but it gives you ways to tweak your journaling practice to figure out the best journaling practice and habit for you.

Positive Thoughts Biologically Change Your Body

Both negative and positive thoughts travel through the same brain cycle when formed. Thoughts are like a tree with numerous branches, including electrical impulses, chemicals, and neurons. All five of your senses – sight, sound, smell, touch, and taste – are your contact between the outside world and your internal world, thereby activating your mind.

As the data from your five senses pours into your brain, your brain is gathering electrical impulses through your peripheral nerves. These senses become the entry way into your intellect, influencing your free will and your feelings.

The first step in the process, the forming of thought and the gathering of electrical impulses, makes sense of the information coming in from your five senses. This incoming data then goes through some outstanding cerebrum structures

that flavor, enhance, and circulate the data along the way.

The data is taken to a place where you can decide on the permanence of that data and whether it becomes part of your identity. Here, the brain can react to positive and negative thoughts as well as accepting or rejecting them.

When the data enters your brain through any of your five senses, it passes through a major transmitter station (the Thalamus) that screens and processes this information. The Thalamus is the meeting point for all the nerves that interface with the distinctive parts of the brain. There isn't a signal from your environment that does not go through the Thalamus. [[Click here for extensive NYTimes article on the topic.](#)]

The Thalamus connects the brain to the body and the body to the brain. It allows the entire brain to receive large amounts of important data from the external and internal worlds simultaneously. The Thalamus transmits the electrical information throughout your brain, activating existing thoughts (or nerve cells) in the outer part of the brain, the cerebral cortex, to help you understand the incoming information.

This wonderfully complex transmission of information through the cerebral cortex alerts and activates attitude. Attitude is a state of mind that influences our decisions as well as what we say and do as a result of these choices. If the attitude activated in the cerebral cortex is negative, then the emotional reaction will naturally be a negative or stressed feeling within the depths of your mind.

While the feeling will be peaceful if the attitude is positive, the fact is your attitude will be uncovered regardless of how long you try to hide it. Then the activated attitude – positive or negative – is transmitted from the Thalamus down to the Hypothalamus. The Thalamus signals the

Hypothalamus to prepare a response to your thoughts chemically.

The Endocrine System is an accumulation of glands and organs that mostly produce and regulate your hormones. The Hypothalamus often controls things like thirst, hunger, body temperature, and the body's reaction to your emotional life. This implies that if you are anxious or stressed about something, the Hypothalamus responds to this anxious and worrying attitude with a flurry of stress chemicals engaging the Pituitary Gland.

The Endocrine System secretes the hormones responsible for organizing the trillions of cells in your body to deal with any impending threats. Negative thoughts shift your body's concentration to a mode of protection and decreases your capacity to process and think with wisdom or develop sound thoughts.

If you change your attitude positively, the Hypothalamus will cause the discharge of chemicals that encourage the feeling of peace, and the rest of the brain will respond by releasing the right formula of neurotransmitters for thought building and clear thinking. You can choose to reject the presently-activated thoughts and the incoming data, or you can let the information make its way into your mind, and spirit, eventually subsiding in your non-conscious, which dominates who you are.

You can't always control your conditions, and especially outside influences, but you CAN make decisions that will help you control your response to your conditions and keep toxic input out of your brain.

Being prepared with tools such as *responding* over *reacting*, daily gratitude, and/or keep a steady practice of meditation, will help you filter out negative reactions to outward stimuli so you can maintain a positive attitude – in both mind and

body.