

## Journaling your way to wellness



Keeping a journal can be very helpful in becoming and staying well. Studies show this easy tool helps reduce stress, builds positive thoughts and feelings, and helps understand thoughts and feelings that may be holding each of us back.<sup>1</sup>

### **There are different kinds of journaling. Which one of these might work best for you?**

- **Gratitude Journal:** List five things you are grateful for each day. This helps re-think bad days and stay positive in the face of difficulties.
- **Thoughts and Feelings Journal:** freely write your thoughts and feelings. Begin to see common themes and consider how to make changes and better manage feelings.
- **Artistic or Graphic Journal:** instead of words, use images to show your feelings. You can use photographs, online clips, pictures you create, and things you cut from magazines.
- **Prompts Journal:** use any of the journaling prompts on page four and any you might find online to start your journal each day and explore different thoughts and feelings.
- **Spiritual Journal:** use passages from the Bible, Koran or other spiritual text and write about what each one means to you and what you want to change or improve in your life.
- **Goal Focused Journal:** use your journal to set goals and work on achieving these goals every day. (Tip: Building Your Way To Wellness, another Optum tool, can help you do this.) <https://www.liveandworkwell.com/public/content/showHotTopic.asp?hid=18&lang=1>
- **Nature Journal:** notice what the outside world looks like each day. Use this to think about your own feelings and concerns.

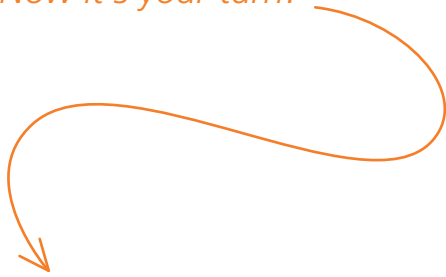
<sup>1</sup> <http://www.apa.org/monitor/jun02/writing.aspx>

### Some people like to add a few things to their journal

- A number indicating their mood on that day:
  - 1 is not good
  - 5 is great
- A note about what kind of exercise they did.
- A note about what they ate and/or how much water they drank.
- A note about having a job and a safe place to live.

Working your wellness is an important part of becoming and staying well. Journaling is an easy no cost way to **feel better, work through issues and be your best.**

*Now it's your turn!*



### E X A M P L E

#### GRATITUDE JOURNAL

Today I am grateful for:

- 1 It's raining, I would like to see the sun but I know we need rain for the trees to grow and the birds to have a home. I am grateful for the rain and the future bird song.
- 2 A lady at the store held the door for me. I thanked her sincerely and I know she felt good. I felt good she was so caring. I am grateful for that small kindness.
- 3 My puppy Annie because she is always so sweet.

Five things I am grateful for today:

1. \_\_\_\_\_
2. \_\_\_\_\_
3. \_\_\_\_\_
4. \_\_\_\_\_
5. \_\_\_\_\_

Today I feel: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Tomorrow I want to: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**There is no right or wrong way to keep a journal, however you might find these tips helpful**

- Get or make your journal — this can be a pad of paper, a blank book; it can even be used printer paper you staple together.
- You may prefer a free or low cost journaling app for your phone. There are many good ones available.
- Find a time when you have few distractions.
- Try to do this at the same time each day so it becomes a habit.
- Keep your journal private — if you share it you may begin writing it for others instead of yourself.
- Do not try and write the perfect words — just write what you think and feel.
- Try it for at least two weeks — it will take a bit of time to get used to it.
- Reread your journal entry at times and see if you spot any patterns you want to change.

*Now it's your turn!*



E X A M P L E

**PROMPTS JOURNAL**

- P** What are some of your strengths? What gets in the way of being or feeling at your best?
- A** I do some things really well. I can meet people and interact pretty well. I am loving to my family, but I can get grumpy and frustrated too fast. One of the things I am working on is...

**What are some of your strengths? What gets in the way of being or feeling at your best?**

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## 20 Ideas for Journal Prompts:

1. Envision your favorite place. What makes this place special? How can you add more of this feeling into your life?
2. What was your favorite thing to do as a child? Why? How can you bring some of this back into your life?
3. Imagine yourself perfectly happy in five years. What is your life like? What makes it great? What can you do today to take one step toward that happy future?
4. Imagine you need to leave your home quickly and can take just a few things with you. What would you take and why?
5. You are walking calmly in a beautiful setting. What does it look like? Who do you see? What happens next?
6. Think about the different kinds of animals in the world. Which one describes you best? Why? Which one do you want to be like?
7. Sit for a minute and consciously breathe in good. What good are you envisioning? What good do you want to bring into your life?
8. Sit for a moment and consciously breathe out the bad. What bad do you want to leave your life? How can you take one step to do this?
9. What will you/have you done differently than your parents when raising your children? Your pets?
10. Think about your perfect job. What makes it perfect?
11. What is your favorite smell? Why?
12. If your pet or a pet of a friend were to talk, what would they say about you to you?
13. If you could change one thing in your life what would it be?
14. Think about the eight dimensions of wellness: Emotional, Environmental, Financial, Intellectual, Occupational, Physical, Social, and Spiritual. Which dimension do you need to work on? What can you do?
15. Think about the eight dimensions of wellness: Emotional, Environmental, Financial, Intellectual, Occupational, Physical, Social, and Spiritual. Which dimension are you really good at?
16. What is the favorite gift you ever received? Why?
17. What is the favorite gift you ever gave? Why?
18. Describe a recurring dream you have had at any time in your life. What do you think it means?
19. Consider the four elements: Wind, Water, Earth and Fire. Which best describes your life? Which describes the life you want to create?
20. Describe your perfect road trip. Where are you going? Who is with you? What kind of car?



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