6 ways to be more positive

Negative thinking puts an unhealthy strain on your mind and body. Harness your inner optimism with these tips from our experts.

A glass half full

Happy people are healthy people.

How do we know?

Research suggests that positive thinking can:

• Increase your life span

• Decrease depression or distress

• Battle the common cold

• Improve your heart health

• Build stress-coping skills

A glass half empty

We've all let fear, anger or sadness get the better of us. But knowing these 4 positivity pitfalls can help you avoid them in darker times:

Filtering — Magnifying negative aspects of a situation

Personalizing — Blaming yourself for everything

Catastrophizing — Anticipating the worst will happen

Polarizing — Feeling you need to be perfect or else you're a failure

6 tips that stick

Take an active role in improving your outlook by trying these 6 simple tricks:

1. Practice mindfulness

Be fully present in everything you do, from drinking coffee to interacting with family.

2. Create a gratitude journal

Every night, write down three things for which you are thankful.

3. Use daily affirmations

Find positive statements and repeat them throughout the day.

4. Get active

Exercise can relieve stress, improve sleep and boost your overall mood.

5. Try relaxation techniques

From basic breathing to active massage, learn ways to ease your mind.

6. Engage in your favorite activities

Don't let negativity keep you from doing your favorite things.

From the experts

"There is evidence that people who have more resiliency, optimism and larger social networks tend to be healthier and live longer."

— Dr. Brian Miller, a psychiatrist affiliated with Sharp Grossmont Hospital

"Positive people tend to show gratitude for the small things in life and tend to surround themselves with other positive people."

— Dr. Suhair Erikat, a licensed marriage and family therapist (LMFT) and doctor of behavioral health (DBH) with Sharp Mesa Vista Hospital