

<https://www.verywellmind.com/the-benefits-of-journaling-for-stress-management-3144611>

What Qualifies as Journaling?

Journaling generally involves the practice of keeping a diary or journal that explores thoughts and feelings surrounding the events of your life. There are several different ways to do this. Journaling, as a stress management and self-exploration tool, works best when done consistently, but even occasional, sporadic journaling can be stress relieving when the practice is focused on gratitude or emotional processing.

One of the most effective ways to reduce stress with journaling is to write in detail about feelings and thoughts related to stressful events, as one would discuss topics in therapy, and brainstorm solutions, but there are several different ways to practice journaling. The method you choose can depend on your needs at the time, and your personality; just do what feels right.

What Are The Benefits of Journaling?

Journaling allows people to clarify their thoughts and feelings, thereby gaining valuable self-knowledge. It's also a good problem-solving tool; oftentimes, one can hash out a problem and come up with solutions more easily on paper. Journaling about traumatic events helps one process them by fully exploring and releasing the emotions involved, and by engaging both hemispheres of the brain in the process, allowing the experience to become fully integrated within one's mind. Journaling can also help you to focus on areas of your life that you're like to focus on more often, as is the case with [gratitude journaling](#) or even [coincidence journaling](#).

As for the [health benefits](#) of journaling, they've been scientifically proven. Research shows the following:

- Journaling decreases the symptoms of [asthma](#), arthritis, and other health conditions.
- It improves cognitive functioning.
- It strengthens the [immune system](#), preventing a host of illnesses.
- It counteracts many of the negative effects of stress.

What Are The Drawbacks to Journaling?

Those with learning disabilities may find it difficult to deal with the act of writing itself. [Perfectionists](#) may be so concerned with the readability of their work, their penmanship, or other periphery factors that they can't focus on the thoughts and emotions they're trying to access. Others may get tired hands, or be reluctant to relive negative experiences. And, journaling only about your negative feelings without incorporating thoughts or plans may actually cause more stress. (A simple way to counteract this is to be sure you end your journaling sessions with a few words about potential solutions to your problems, things you appreciate in your life, or things that give you hope in life.)

How Does Journaling Compare to Other Stress Management Practices?

Unlike more physical stress management techniques such as [yoga](#) or [exercise](#), journaling is a viable option for the disabled. And, although some prefer to use a computer, journaling requires only a pen and paper, so it's less expensive than techniques that require the aid of a class, book, teacher or therapist, like techniques such as [biofeedback](#) or [yoga](#). Journaling doesn't release tension from your body like [progressive muscle relaxation](#), [guided imagery](#) and other physical and [meditative](#) techniques, however.

But it's a great practice for overall stress reduction as well as self-knowledge and emotional healing.

Journaling Strategies to Try

Journaling is a highly effective tool for stress relief and can take several forms, so there are multiple options that can work for you. If you already have a favorite journaling habit, by all means, keep it up! But you may want to try something new in addition to it. And if you're new to journaling, here are several practices to try. See what works best for you.

- **Gratitude Journal:** Some people keep a daily gratitude journal where they list three or more aspects of each day for which they are grateful. This is a highly effective strategy for relieving stress because it helps you to focus on the resources you have in your life already and create a more positive mood in the moment, both of which have been shown to build long-term resilience. A bonus benefit is that you are left with a record of the many nice things that have happened throughout your days, so if you're feeling down in the future, you can cheer yourself up with a few pages of reminders for the things you have to appreciate in life.
- **Emotional Release:** You may also write about your emotional responses to events that have happened throughout the day as a way of coping with the stress. This can help you to process what you are feeling and perhaps even explore more positive reframing options. When writing about positive experiences, this allows you the ability to maximize and savor the positive feelings you may have for the good things that have happened in your day. This is also a great way to expand on the positive and manage the negative things that happen in your life, increasing your positivity ratio, which is an important aspect of stress management.
- **Bullet Journal or Personal Planning Journal:** Some people simply keep journals to track what they need to do each day, goals they have, memories they create, and other things they don't want to forget. Because writing things down can help keep your mind uncluttered and help you to remember what's important to you, this can relieve stress as well. Being more organized and balanced is a great way to feel less stressed.

And remember, if you find yourself not keeping a regular schedule with journaling, it's a habit you can resume at any time. You don't have to journal every day in order for it to work for you--a few times a week is still highly beneficial, and even journaling on an as-needed basis brings benefits. If you had a journaling habit and stopped because life got in the way, remember--any day is a good day to get back into the habit!

Sources:

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