

Why should I write a journal?

1. You can use your journal to improve your memory, your mental state, and your physical health.
2. You can use your journal to create an automatic thought record to improve your mood.
3. You can use your journal to get what you want out of life by documenting and tracking your goals.

How does it work?

Write in your journal whenever you have feelings you want to express. Write about difficult situations, problems with friends or family, anxiety, an upcoming test, or anything that happens to be bothering you. This is called **expressive writing**. What makes this writing so useful is that it helps your brain to make sense of a situation and the emotions that go along with it. The simple act of writing about your anxieties has a magical way of helping you better deal with them.

While writing, try to think about the possible causes to your problem, and then try to understand (gain insight) how to best deal with the situation. Use words such as “hence,” “because,” and “therefore.” The goal here is to defragment your thinking.

The secret to effective journal writing is actually doing it. Start writing today for immediate benefits. Write as often as you like. Good luck and have fun!

1. Improve your memory and your health. Your journal will help you improve on math and spelling tests by freeing up resources so that your memory will have more power. It will help you remember musical notes or song lyrics, friends phone numbers, meetings and scheduled events (dances, work, or band practice). It might even help you remember to do your chores.

It can aid in strengthening grades and improving your work. Journal writing has been shown to improve your cognitive abilities (the way you think).

Deal with stressful situations and anxiety the productive and healthy way. Research has shown that anxiety about an upcoming test will actually cause you thinking problems at test time. Journal writing is a tool that can give you the strength, energy and space in order to effectively handle difficult situations.

2. Improve your mood. Everybody experiences a bad mood now and then. You can use your journal to get yourself in a better mood, so you can be happy. Whenever you notice you’re feeling down, use your journal to write an “automatic thought record” (ATR). Ask yourself “what is going through my mind right now?” Write down answers to these questions:

- What is the evidence that the automatic thought is true?
- Is there an alternative explanation?
- What is the worst that could happen? Could I live through it?
- What is the most realistic outcome?
- What could be the effect of my changing my thinking?

Start writing now!

3. Accomplish Goals. Use your journal to establish goals. Develop short and long term goals. A short-term goal might be something you want to do, have or accomplish in the next month or two. A long-term goal might be an accomplishment you are aiming for in a year or two.