

Journaling: Small Habit, Big Impact

How many half-empty journals do you have sitting around—pages filled with a few good intentions before life got in the way? You're not alone. Most people start journaling with enthusiasm but struggle to keep it going. Yet, science suggests that sticking with it could be one of the best things you do for your mental well-being, self-awareness, and even cognitive function.



Why Journaling Works (And Why Your Brain Loves It)

There's a reason journaling feels good when you do it, it's changing the way your brain processes emotions. Writing down your thoughts helps shift them from the reactive, emotional part of your brain (the amygdala) to the rational, problem-solving part (the prefrontal cortex). This is why journaling has been shown to reduce stress and anxiety, giving your brain a chance to process difficult emotions instead of just reacting to them.

Research backs this up. Studies have found that expressive writing can reduce overactivity in the brain's fear and stress centers while strengthening neural pathways linked to self-reflection and emotional regulation. This is the same principle used in cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT), where changing the way we think about a situation can change how we feel about it.

Beyond emotional benefits, journaling also engages the brain's language and memory centers, improving recall, clarity, and even problem-solving skills. Handwriting has been linked to deeper cognitive processing—so if you're looking for an extra boost, consider putting pen to paper.

Why We Struggle to Keep Up with Journaling (and How to Fix It)

Most of us know journaling can be helpful, so why do our notebooks gather dust instead of insights?

- "I don't know what to write about." Instead of waiting for inspiration, use a simple prompt. Something as small as "What's one thing I'm grateful for today?" or "What's a small win I accomplished this week?" can be enough to get started.

- **"I don't have time."** You don't need an hour, just two to three minutes. Even jotting down a quick list or a single takeaway from the day can make a difference.
- **"I'm worried someone might read it."** If privacy is a concern, consider a password-protected digital journal or keep a small notebook in a secure place.
- **"I'm not a good writer."** Journaling isn't about polished prose—it's about getting thoughts out of your head. Bullet points, fragmented sentences, or even a series of random thoughts all count.
- **"I always start but never stick with it."** Instead of aiming for daily entries, start small. Journaling once a week—or even just when something significant happens—can still be beneficial. Consistency matters more than frequency.

Simple Prompts to Get You Started

If you've ever picked up an old journal and wished you had written more, now is the time to change that. Here are a few quick prompts to help you start (and stick with) journaling:

- What's one thing I learned about myself today?
- How did I handle a stressful situation recently?
- What's one thing I'm grateful for today?
- What's a current challenge I'm facing, and what are possible solutions?
- What's a small win I accomplished this week?

Journaling isn't about perfection, it's about showing up for yourself. The next time you come across an unfinished journal, let it be the start of something consistent, not another reminder of what you wished you had written.

**For more information, tools, resources, or app information, call your
Life Advisor Employee Assistance Program!**



**Ulliance provides no cost, confidential, short-term counseling
for you & your family.**

Call us- we're here to help **800.448.8326**