

WANT TO BE AN OPTIMIST?



Do you want to be more optimistic and less frustrated and upset by the daily things that happen in your life? Would you like some strategies to help look on the bright side of life, even when things are feeling tough? Many of us get caught in thinking traps where we think the worst and overreact to the size of the problem.

What is optimism?

Optimism is defined as the quality of being hopeful and emphasizing the good parts of a situation, or a belief that something good will happen. It is a mindset that leads us to see the positive side of things and facilitates expectations that things will turn out well. Conversely, pessimism is used to describe a mindset when people tend to see the faults in everything, focus on what didn't go well or expect things to turn out poorly.

While people are not solely optimistic or pessimistic, we usually have a tendency toward one of these thinking styles. For those who may lean toward pessimism more naturally, there are some good tools to adjust the way we perceive and attach meaning to experiences.

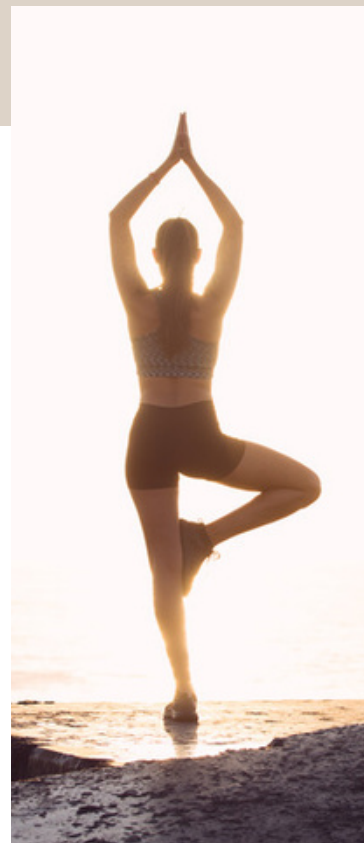
OPTIMISM



The Stats

Research has found that optimistic women live, on average, 5.4% longer (approximately 4.4 years) than less optimistic women and have been more likely to achieve exceptional longevity, defined as living over 90 years.

Positive and negative expectations regarding the future have been found to be linked to mental and physical health. Optimism is a mindset that heavily influences physical and mental health, as well as coping with everyday social and working life. It is a protective factor against mood and anxiety disorders, and physical illness, and is linked to better physical and mental wellbeing. It is positively correlated with coping strategies ideated to eliminate, reduce, or manage the stressors. Optimists have a longer life expectation, are healthier, have higher self-esteem and confidence, better resilience, experience less stress, form more positive relationships and enjoy work more. Those with a pessimistic mindset nurture less hope for the future, are more at risk of depressive and anxiety disorders, and report excessive somatic complaints.



How can we be more **optimistic?**



Here are some tips to get you started on your journey to facilitate a more optimistic mindset:

- Notice your thinking patterns and reframe negative thoughts. Recognise when an intrusive or unhelpful thought is taking over and consciously chose to practice a more helpful thought for the situation.
- Focus on finding the good in experiences and situations. Assume that outcomes will be positive. When we imagine being successful or that others are thinking positively about us, we are more likely to have a good outcome. As we cannot possibly predict the future, try being positive and brave.
- Practice gratitude. Take set time each day and note the things that you are grateful for
- Be accountable. Rather than blaming others when things go wrong, look at the experience with curiosity and ask yourself the question "what did this teach me?" or "what do I now know that I didn't before?"
- Strive to improve your physical health through exercise, a healthy diet, and good sleeping habits and hygiene. The better you feel, the brighter your outlook will be.
- Stop comparing yourself to others. Limit online use of social media and focus on bettering yourself from the person that you were last week, yesterday or this morning.
- When we are faced with challenges, new experiences, or overwhelming situations, remind yourself that setbacks are temporary, and no success is linear. We are often terrible judges of our progress and tend to look at start and end points rather than the growth and development that occurs throughout the process. Look at the bigger picture and consider how mistakes are steps down the path to success.

