

Can happy THOUGHTS make a HEALTHY you?

* HEALTH

Yes, say researchers from the Chuo University in Japan. Maldivians are happier and healthier thanks to their trusting nature. iTALK tells you how to convert positive thinking into positive healing

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While most optimists consider positive thinking a powerful tool, pessimists dismiss it as a placebo effect, with little or no consequence. While there is no hard evidence to conclude that positive thinking can result in positive healing, several studies indicate that those with

a positive attitude are happier, healthier, and live longer.

According to researchers from Chuo University in Japan, Maldivians are the healthiest in Asia because of their trust the mass media. Those who trusted the press more also tended to be married, had higher incomes, better friendships and took health advice that was printed, seriously enough to act on it.

HAPPY THOUGHTS CAN EVEN BATTLE PAIN

- ▶ Positive emotions give you energy, while negative emotions deplete them, leaving you tired and frustrated.
- ▶ Studies indicate that human thinking patterns affect human behavioural patterns. So, better health is possible through positive thinking.
- ▶ People who are content are more likely to take good care of themselves, eat healthy and exercise. Staying fit cuts down the risk of lifestyle diseases like diabetes and heart disease.
- ▶ When your mind and body are in sync with each other, there are less chances of being physically and emotionally stressed. As a result, your body conserves energy, that's required for its smooth functioning.

POSITIVITY AS IMPORTANT AS MEDICINE IN CANCER RECOVERY



SHEELA PRABHU, 64 is in-charge of the reach-to-recovery programme (a support group for breast cancer patients) at the Indian Cancer Society, Mumbai.

She is certain that positive thinking, in addition to medicines, helped her battle what could have been a fatal illness. "When I was diagnosed with breast cancer, I thought I was going to die. But I realised I had to live for my children. Positive thoughts kept me focussed on getting better, rather than lamenting on my fate. I accepted the fact that I would have to go in for mastectomy (surgical removal of one or both breasts)," says Prabhu, who now counsels breast cancer patients and helps make breast prostheses that they can use.

POSITIVE THINKING CAN WORK AGAINST YOU

VARKHA CHULANI
Clinical psychologist and psychotherapist



"In certain circumstances, positive thinking can in fact, harm. Like in the case of a heart patient who has been advised to avoid climbing stairs. He thinks anything is possible if there's a will. I would advocate rational thinking, where you accept the negatives of a given situation and decide to deal with it, rather than give up."

POSITIVE THINKING MAKES YOU STRONGER

DR HARSHADA RAJADHYAKSHA
Physiotherapist to sports stars



"All injuries have physical and mental consequences. The mind plays an important role in the healing process. Once a patient accepts that he/she has a problem, and decides to cooperate and follow medical advice, quick recovery is possible. While overnight recovery is not possible, positive thinking gives the patient a reason to work on the problem, and come back even stronger."

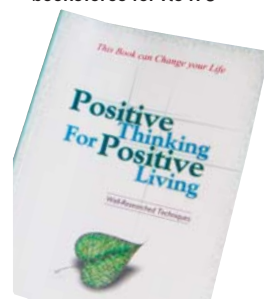


Indian cinema audiences remember actor Anil Kapoor's favourite diktat in No Entry: "Be Positive, yaar". It's a mantra that has worked wonders for his career, with his latest release Slumdog Millionaire, winning awards and critical acclaim.
PIC/SHADAB KHAN

You will succeed, only if you think you can, says self-help writer

Positive ideas can take you as far as you want to go, says H Karstein, author of Positive Thinking For Positive Living. Positive Mental Attitude (PMA) can take a person with average talent, to tremendous heights, while a negative mental attitude can turn a genius towards mediocrity.

Available at all leading bookstores for Rs 175



Mind and body are linked

- ▶ Most spiritual leaders believe there is a vital connection between the mind and body. Emotions play a role in acting as motivators or barriers in the healing process.
- ▶ While positive emotions keep chemical changes in perfect balance, resulting in optimum health, negativity can disrupt it, depriving organs like the pancreas of regular blood supply, leading to diabetes. Stress contributes to heart disease and ulcers.
- ▶ Deal with negative thoughts and emotions by replacing them with positive ones. Always put a smile on your face, listen to happy songs, keep yourself occupied, practice relaxation techniques and stay away from drugs and alcohol.
- ▶ Our thoughts attract failure or success. So, if you want to attract success, you have to learn to believe that you have the power to make things happen for you.
- ▶ When faced with a painful disease, remember that drawing attention away from the pain will chase it away. The body has natural painkillers called endorphins, that only a positive mind can release.

YOGA@WORK



Shameem Akhtar
yoga instructor

Arm work

Working out the arm is important to prevent spine-related ailments. Try these two asanas to tone your arms.



PICS/SURESH KK

Pawan Muktasana (Energy release):

Method: Maybe done seated or standing. Hold a heavy book in your hand. Move the hand up and down, while matching your breath with it: Inhaling while lifting hand and exhaling while lowering it. You may hold the book in one hand (more challenging) or with both hands. Repeat 10 to 15 times.

Benefits: Works out the entire arm, including shoulder joints. Prevents neck and frozen shoulder problems, common with sedentary workers.



Pawan Muktasana (Energy release):

Method: May be done seated or standing. Hold a heavy book in one hand. Pass hand over head. Reach other hand too. Grasp book. Hold for a few seconds, adjusting your head to look straight ahead. Release. Repeat a few times. **Avoid:** In acute shoulder pain. Attempt this after some gentle warm-ups like shoulder rolls.

Benefits: Same as above. **Neck muscles, which support respiration, are powered.**