



**Mental Health 365, Inc.**



# Tips For Improving Your Quality of Life

**Read on to learn about the theory and research surrounding quality of life and tips for improving yours.**

Do you have a good quality of life? What exactly does quality of life refer to? Does quality of life simply refer to happiness or is it more complicated than that?

Quality of life is discussed in various fields of study, including psychology, international development, economics, and healthcare. The term can refer to different constructs depending on the context in which it is used. For this reason, and possibly frustratingly, there is no single widely agreed-upon definition of quality of life.

Having said that, the World Health Organization (WHO) provides us with a sense of direction by presenting one definition. They define quality of life as “an individual’s perception of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live and in relation to their goals, expectations, standards, and concerns” (who.int, n.d.). Because of the WHO’s international influence, their definition is significant—especially since it is used in much public and global health research. An important takeaway from their definition is that quality of life is a subjective measure of one’s well-being. Of course, even this key point is debated, with some researchers insisting that quality of life must involve objective as well as subjective measures (Karimi & Brazier, 2016).

While there are numerous ways of thinking about quality of life, for this article, we will focus predominantly on how the concept is relevant to you and your well-being. To this end, we will focus mostly on subjective measures, as well as health-related quality of life (HRQoL), which excludes non-health aspects of quality of life, such as economic and political circumstances. The main reason for this is that you likely have more control over your health-related quality of life (both physical and mental) than your country’s economic and political situation.

# Tips for Improving Your Quality of Life

In order to improve your quality of life, it might be helpful to first assess your quality of life in different domains and focus on domains where there is the most room for improvement. As a starting point, you can begin by considering the six domains chosen by the WHO (Physical, Psychological, Level of independence, Social relationships, Environment, and Spirituality/religion/personal beliefs).

Do these domains resonate with you? Do you feel that some of these domains are irrelevant to your life, or that other key domains are missing? Really dig in and ask yourself how and why you might be falling short in these areas. Below are some examples of questions, based on some of the WHO's domains, to get you thinking.

## PHYSICAL

- Is your physical health adding to or detracting from your quality of life?
- How do certain food choices affect your mood and energy levels?
- How satisfied are you with your sleep quantity and quality?
- How often do you move your body?

## PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Are you satisfied with how you manage your emotions and moods?
- Are you living in the present or do you find yourself in a cycle of distraction?
- Are you optimistic about the future?
- Do you feel that you are resilient when faced with life stressors?

## SOCIAL RELATIONSHIPS

- Do you have someone to talk to about your struggles?
- How confident are you when you meet new people?
- Do you feel like you have good communication with your significant other/friends/family?

## SPIRITUALITY/RELIGION/PERSONAL BELIEFS

- Is religion/spirituality important to you?
- Do you have individuals with whom you can discuss your personal beliefs?
- Is spirituality a source of confusion for you?
- Is the media you consume helping you grow as a person?

The next steps you take will depend on your answers to the above questions and any other questions you come up with for yourself. Improvement in any domain will not be a quick fix or overnight change. Instead, changes will be slow and gradual and likely based on minor habit changes in your everyday life.

Focus on aspects of your life that you have the power to change - there are plenty. Remember to track your progress, either by taking a quality of life assessment now and after a period of time, or by reflecting regularly in a journal. Seeing your progress can motivate you to continue your journey.

## In Sum

The theory and research behind quality of life are wide-reaching and nebulous, but that doesn't mean reflecting on yours is a futile endeavor. By breaking it down into domains and assessing yourself formally or informally in each domain, you can determine how best to spend your time to improve your quality of life and overall well-being.

## References

- Karimi, M., & Brazier, J. (2016). Health, health-related quality of life, and quality of life: what is the difference?. *Pharmacoeconomics*, 34(7), 645-649.
- World Health Organization. (n.d.). WHOQOL - Measuring Quality of Life | The World Health Organization. World Health Organization.