The Queen's Daily Reign Habits™: What the Research Says

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How the Queen's Daily Reign Habits™ work

The Queen's Daily Reign Habits™ are the journal's non-negotiable daily foundation, starting before the world wakes up and closing with reflection before sleep. Each day, you check off:

1. **Gratitude:** write one thing you are grateful for.
2. **Set Intention:** decide who you will be today before the day decides for you.
3. **Journal:** give your thoughts a place to land.
4. **Breathwork / Meditation:** a few minutes of intentional breathing, such as square (box) breathing.
5. **Health / Movement:** any intentional movement: walk, stretch, dance, lift.
6. **Attitude Evaluation:** your daily Hansei moment.
7. **Creativity / Expression:** make something that is yours.

Blank rows let you add your own. Every habit on the list has peer-reviewed research behind it.

Bottom line

Each daily habit is supported by research. In a study of more than 36,000 adults, the most physically active had a markedly lower risk of early death than the least active, and activity of any intensity counted. In a randomized trial, five minutes a day of structured breathing, including box breathing, improved mood and slowed breathing rate. Meditation programs produced small to moderate reductions in anxiety and depression across 47 trials, and if-then planning had a large effect on reaching goals. Everyday creative activity, from painting to cooking, is linked to feeling more energized and fulfilled the next day, and gardening is linked to better mental and physical health. Expressive writing and gratitude practice are each linked to better wellbeing, with more modest effects. The habits themselves have not been tested together in a study.

What the research shows

Health / Movement: every bit of activity counts

A meta-analysis of 36,383 middle-aged and older adults, with activity measured by wearable devices, found that the most active quarter had about a 73% lower risk of early death than the least active quarter (Ekelund et al., 2019). Activity of any intensity, including light activity, was linked to lower risk, and more time sitting was linked to higher risk.

Breathwork: five minutes a day

In a randomized trial, people practiced one of three five-minute daily breathing exercises, including box breathing, or mindfulness meditation for one month (Balban et al., 2023). Breathwork improved mood and reduced breathing rate more than meditation, with exhale-focused breathing showing the strongest effect.

Meditation: calmer mind

A systematic review of 47 randomized trials with 3,515 participants found that meditation programs produced small to moderate reductions in anxiety, depression and pain (Goyal et al., 2014).

Set Intention: planning turns goals into action

A meta-analysis of 28 experiments found that forming specific if-then plans, deciding when, where and how you will act, had a large effect on reaching goals, including among people facing mental health challenges (Toli et al., 2016).

Journal: putting experiences into words

A meta-analysis of 146 randomized studies found that writing about personal thoughts and feelings had a small but significant positive effect on psychological and physical wellbeing (Frattaroli, 2006).

Gratitude: a modest, real lift

A meta-analysis found gratitude practices improved psychological wellbeing compared with doing nothing or a neutral activity, though not more than other active wellbeing practices (Davis et al., 2016). Gratitude is a helpful daily habit, best paired with the others on this list.

Creativity / Expression: drawing, music, cooking, gardening and more

In a daily diary study, 658 young adults recorded their creative activity, mood and sense of flourishing for 13 days (Conner et al., 2018). Activities included painting, drawing, writing, knitting, making new recipes and making music. On the days after people were more creative than usual, they felt more enthusiastic and energized and reported greater flourishing. The link ran in one direction: creative activity predicted feeling better the next day, but feeling good did not predict being more creative.

Gardening shows a similar pattern. A meta-analysis of 22 studies found a significant positive effect of gardening on health, including lower depression, anxiety and stress, and greater life satisfaction, quality of life and sense of community (Soga et al., 2017). The effect held after adjusting for publication bias.

A World Health Organization review mapped more than 900 publications, covering over 3,000 studies, and found a major role for the arts in preventing ill health and promoting health across the lifespan (Fancourt & Finn, 2019).

Over the long term, in a 14-year study of 6,710 adults aged 50 and older, those who engaged with the arts every few months or more had a 31% lower risk of dying during follow-up than those who never did, even after accounting for health, wealth and other factors (Fancourt & Steptoe, 2019).

Attitude Evaluation

The research behind the daily attitude check-in is summarized on the Sovereign Attitude Assessment™ research page.

What the research cannot yet show

The Queen's Daily Reign Habits™ have not been tested together in a study; this page applies the findings above. The movement and arts studies are observational, so they show links rather than proof of cause, and the arts-and-longevity study measured attending events like museums and concerts rather than creating art. The everyday creativity study followed young adults for two weeks. Gratitude and expressive writing effects are modest, and the breathwork trial lasted one month.

Disclaimer

This summary is for educational purposes only and is not medical or mental health advice. It describes published research on the principles behind the journal; the Queen's Daily Reign Habits™ have not been tested in a clinical study. Talk with a qualified healthcare provider before starting a new exercise or breathing practice, especially if you have a medical condition.

References

Sources are peer-reviewed journal articles, most indexed in PubMed, plus one World Health Organization evidence review hosted on the National Library of Medicine's NCBI Bookshelf.

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