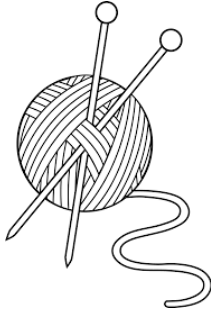


# *December 2016 Newsletter*



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## Getting Crafty!

Knitting, quilting, and other crafts may seem like nothing more than pleasant hobbies, but research shows that regularly engaging in them may have health benefits.

**Reduce stress:** The rhythmic, repetitive movements and focused attention required for certain crafts seem to produce a calming effect akin to meditation. In a study that surveyed 3,545 knitters worldwide, published in the British Journal of Occupational Therapy in 2013, participants noted that knitting was soothing and restful, and had meditative or zen-like qualities. Most said it helped them relieve stress and unwind from the pressures of work.

**Improve mood:** In the same British study, people reported that they generally were happier after knitting. Knitting with others appeared to be particularly beneficial, especially for those who had depression. Of course, there's also the lasting pleasure that comes from accomplishing a project and enjoying the finished item. Or perhaps even more enjoyable, giving it to someone else.

**Head off cognitive decline:** In a study in the Journal of Neuropsychiatry and Clinical Neurosciences in 2011, researchers surveyed more than 1,300 older adults, ages 70 to 89, and found that those who engaged in crafts such as knitting or quilting had a lower risk of mild cognitive impairment, a possible precursor to dementia. The reduced risk was similar to that seen in people who read a lot, worked on computers, or played cognitive games.

**Cope with chronic pain:** In a small study presented at a meeting of the British Pain Society in 2009, researchers surveyed 60 knitters who suffered from chronic pain. The knitters reported a sense of increased purpose, meaning, and control as a result of their hobby. They also reported that knitting distracted them from their pain. And those who belonged to a knitting group reported that they felt less isolated and enjoyed a sense of belonging. There was no comparison group and it's possible that other engaging hobbies or social activities would have been equally helpful.

**How to get started:** Check with a local crafts or knitting store to find classes and workshops in your area. There are also many meet-up groups for knitting, crocheting, and other crafts nationwide.

Or, talk to Joanne Tate or Marjorie Flohr and join them on two afternoons each month for a social time of knitting or crocheting for LAMP or Jewels for Jesus.

And as a bonus, if you're new to knitting, what better way to learn your craft than with an experienced knitter who can help you correct any mistakes