
INTERNATIONAL GRIEF INSTITUTE

RESILIENCE

RX™

KNITTING THERAPY

Self care techniques for the bereaved

The science behind why they work and how to implement them after loss



An iCare Aftercare™ resource
International Grief Institute

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INVESTING IN COMMUNITY RESILIENCY

HISTORY

While the origins of knitting are unknown, the oldest known knitted artifact came from Egypt—a pair of socks dating back to the 11th century. Knitting became popular in Europe in the 14th century, and many paintings of the Virgin Mary portray Madonna knitting.

Knitting reached its peak during World War II when patterns were issued to encourage civilians to knit gloves and other winter gear for the military. Knitting and crafting were then used therapeutically to treat combat veterans (Bissell & Malloux). Post war, there was a major upswing in the use of knitting.

HOW IT HELPS

Knitting is a mindful activity that serves a number of therapeutic purposes. The simple act of focusing on the moment, repeating stitch after stitch, and turning yarn into something useful offers an escape for the mind with something to show for it.

The repetitive hand motions boost the brain's serotonin and induce a meditative state that slows anxious breathing, reduces stress and depression. The bilateral, coordinated, precise movements of the hands and counting of stitches help preserve cognitive brain function and fine motor skills while the brainwork involved helps reduce ruminating thoughts associated with stress.

COGNITIVE BENEFITS

- ✓ Reduced depression and anxiety
- ✓ Increased sense of self esteem and well being
- ✓ Reduced loneliness and isolation
- ✓ Strengthened problem solving and decision making
- ✓ Promotes social connections

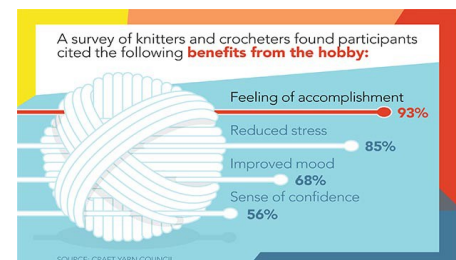
PHYSICAL BENEFITS

- ✓ Reduces cortisol, the stress hormone
- ✓ Slows anxious breathing
- ✓ Lowers blood pressure
- ✓ Distracts from chronic pain
- ✓ Provides sensory pleasure through soft, colorful yarn



NO JUDGMENT

The beauty of knitting is that there is no judgment. One can easily learn a simple stitch and immediately create a chain of stitches. Mistakes such as a mis-stich are easily fixed, and producing something tangible creates a sense of accomplishment and pride.



FREE TUTORIALS

To learn how to knit, enjoy the free tutorials from the websites below to get started.

- ✓ Verypink.com
- ✓ Ravelry.com
- ✓ Lovecrafts.com
- ✓ Sheepandstitch.com