Using Hobbies as Therapy

Finding a hobby that you thoroughly enjoy can be very therapeutic. It can also be beneficial to supplement your counseling, whether you see an online counselor or in-person. In fact, places like [BetterHelp](https://www.betterhelp.com/online-counseling/) offer the ability to learn the best ways you can improve your mental health with your favorite hobby or even to participate in art therapy.

Why is a Hobby Good for Mental Health?

Most people enjoy some sort of hobby. If you do not currently have a hobby, you may have to try a few different things before you find one that you love. When you do have a hobby, you enjoy it can help to significantly improve your mental health. Hobbies can bring joy and meaning into your life. Hobbies can also give you a positive distraction from [stress and anxiety](https://headtohealth.gov.au/meaningful-life/purposeful-activity/hobbies#:~:text=Spending%20time%20on%20an%20activity,feel%20happier%20and%20more%20relaxed).

Regardless of how busy you are, it is important to set aside some time for yourself to do things that you enjoy[. Creativity](https://connecthealth.org.au/enews/pursuing-a-hobby-can-improve-your-mental-health/) can vastly improve your overall wellbeing. This can mean anything from writing, to art, to music. It works because it helps to release hormones, like dopamine, that make us feel good.

However, hobbies that are not necessarily thought of as creative can be beneficial as well. Sports are also a great way to make you feel good. If you are participating in the athletic activity itself, you can improve your [mood from the exercise](https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1470658/) alone. In addition, sports can help your wellbeing because they can help you form a strong connection to other people. Shared experiences make us feel less isolated and more joyful.

Hobbies act as an outlet for our negative emotions. Some, especially things like reading or video games, can offer us a positive escape from our mundane daily routines.

Hobbies for Good Mental Health

Sometimes it is hard to know what hobby you might enjoy or whether or not if will actually be beneficial to your wellbeing. Always remember that every person is unique and enjoys different things. Also, it is important to note that our interests change drastically over time. Therefore, the hobby that gave you joy a few years ago may be vastly different than a hobby you enjoy now. Experiment with different activities to find that one that makes you happy.

Gardening

This is a fantastic hobby that helps you get closer to nature. In fact, research indicates that [plants themselves](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Melinda_Knuth/publication/344010151_An_Update_of_the_Literature_Supporting_the_Well-Being_Benefits_of_Plants_A_Review_of_the_Emotional_and_Mental_Health_Benefits_of_Plants/links/5fada32345851507811359c6/An-Update-of-the-Literature-Supporting-the-Well-Being-Benefits-of-Plants-A-Review-of-the-Emotional-and-Mental-Health-Benefits-of-Plants.pdf) can actually be beneficial to our mental health. Gardening also requires movement that can keep you flexible and in shape.

Fishing

Some people find fishing boring, but if you enjoy it then it can be a great option for a [therapeutic hobby](https://www.psychreg.org/hobby-mental-health/). The patience and focus that fishing requires can help your brain and reduce anxiety and stress. As an added bonus, it often involves movement in the form of hiking or rowing.

Writing

[Writing](https://www.apa.org/monitor/jun02/writing) is great because you can do it virtually anywhere and at any time. Some people like to keep a diary or journal. Others like to focus on poetry, songwriting, or stories. Writing can effectively reduce stress and combat depression. It can also help you improve your memory.

Writing can be very therapeutic and used to identify negative thought patterns and emotions. Then you can work to eliminate them. It is also a great way to distract your mind and keep it away from anxiety inducing thoughts.

Sports

[Participating in sports](https://www.fsem.ac.uk/position_statement/the-role-of-physical-activity-and-sport-in-mental-health/) can be great for both your physical and psychological wellbeing. Sports can help your concentration, increase self-esteem, and reduce anxiety. It can even help your judgment and learning abilities.

Art

Professionals use art in the form of [art therapy](https://arttherapy.org/about-art-therapy/) to improve the mental health of their clients and patients. You can use art as a hobby to help your mental health as well. Studies show that art can help you improve your memory, manage emotions, combat depression, and reduce stress and anxiety. Also, like writing it is an easy hobby to start any time.

Music

Most people [enjoy music](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Kathi_Kemper2/publication/264954368_Music_as_Therapy/links/5a79cc37a6fdcc4ffe92751d/Music-as-Therapy.pdf) and whether you just want to listen to it or want to learn a new musical instrument, this hobby can be therapeutic. In fact, some counselors incorporate music into their sessions in the form of [music therapy](https://www.musictherapy.org/about/musictherapy/). Music can reduce stress and enhance your overall wellbeing. Research also indicates that it may be good for productivity, motivation, and sleep. However, it is important to note that the most effective music for depression and anxiety is classical or other calming types of music.

Final Thoughts on Therapeutic Hobbies

Finding a hobby can bring joy into your life. It can also help you reduce your anxiety and alleviate symptoms of depression. It can be something simple like reading or writing. It can be something visual like art or photography. It can even be something like gardening, auto-mechanics, or collecting. Taking the time to do things you enjoy can greatly improve your mental health and overall wellbeing.