

WELLNESS NEWSLETTER

Hobbies Enliven the Spirit and Save the Brain

193

3

Save



Illustration by The Epoch Times, Shutterstock



By Matthew Little
3/15/2024 Updated: 3/15/2024

Ai Print

Health Viewpoints

There is something imprinted inside us that demands our continued growth.

"Change is the master key. A man can wear out a particular part of his mind by continually using it and tiring it ..." wrote Winston Churchill, in his essay [Painting as a Pastime](#).

Churchill is often regarded as one of the United Kingdom's greatest leaders, a man of remarkable capability and insight. So it may seem odd that he took up painting during a career low point after World War I before then rising to lead his nation during its darkest years of World War II. He understood something of what it takes to renew oneself.

"The tired parts of the mind can be rested and strengthened, not merely by rest, but by using other parts. It is not enough merely to switch off the lights which play upon the main and ordinary field of interest; a new field of interest must be illuminated," he advised.

Churchill's point here is affirmed by modern researchers. We now know that learning and mental challenges are to the brain what exercise is to the body. They keep this essential organ in shape, ready to perform its duties and take on additional responsibilities.

"To be really happy and really safe, one ought to have at least two or three hobbies, and they must all be real," wrote Churchill.

Researchers have started to explore the benefits of hobbies and found they can have important and multifaceted effects. [Knitting](#), for example, can lower blood pressure, improve memory, and reduce the risk of dementia.

Research published in 2015 found engaging in [arts and crafts](#) generally can also preserve memory and reduce cognitive decline.

A [study](#) from the English Longitudinal Study of Ageing found that taking up a new hobby can also stave off depression among older adults.

And other studies have affirmed the health benefits of everything from [music to gardening to writing or playing games like chess or cards](#).

There is something critical about engaging the body with an inspired mind. Doing so was routine in previous generations before screens devoured our creativity and leisure hours.

Even something as common as [handwriting can strengthen the mind](#).

"The word hobby almost sounds childish," writes [Lynn Jaffee in an article on the topic](#). She prefers the word avocation, which refers to an activity beyond one's work or profession, often taken up for enjoyment.

It can be easy to dismiss the value of something with a name that sounds so ... trivial.

Modern people have lost many of these common pursuits and pastimes. We work until we are exhausted, and then watch screens to relax. This is especially the case for the younger generations.

“This lifestyle of workism paired with media catharsis has left millennials and Gen Zers caught in an upward trend of depression, anxiety, and suicidality,” warns [Daniel Buck](#).

“Hobbies fall between the productivity-catharsis divide. Woodworking, embroidery, collecting, crafting, fishing, or any other is not productive like work is. Work is done for what it accomplishes. Leisure activities bring relaxation. Both have an alternative goal. A hobby is done for itself,” he writes.

And, I would argue, a hobby is done for the spirit. It is a chance for something unbridled and creative to emerge from your heart and leave its mark in this world. Such pursuits renew us.

Views expressed in this article are the opinions of the author and do not necessarily reflect the views of The Epoch Times. Epoch Health welcomes professional discussion and friendly debate. To submit an opinion piece, please follow these guidelines and submit through our form here.



Matthew Little
Author

Matthew Little is a senior editor with Epoch Health.

Author's Selected Articles

Retire to a New Life--Not an Early Grave
Sep 27, 2024



Am I a Prepper?
Sep 20, 2024



An Almost Effortless Superpower to Have More Money and Better Health
Sep 13, 2024



Contending With Congestion--Without Losing Our Minds
Sep 06, 2024



RELATED TOPICS
[growth](#) [brain health](#) [hobbies](#) [wellness newsletter](#)

Epoch Health



Explore Our Health Newsletters

Get the best in health and wellness. See all of our inspiring newsletter.

CHOOSE YOURS NOW

Newsletters

- Rise & Shine
- Wellness
- Integrative Medicine
- Nutrition & Supplements
- 21-Day Super Immunity Challenge

Essential Guides

- Parkinson's Disease
- ADHD
- Sciatica
- Celiac Disease
- Vertigo
- Macular Degeneration

Original Series

- Virtue Medicine
- The Roots of Hair Loss
- Harnessing Vagus Nerve Power
- Herbal First Aid Kit
- EMF: The Invisible Hazard

THE CONTENT IN EPOCH HEALTH IS NOT INTENDED TO BE A SUBSTITUTE FOR PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE, DIAGNOSIS OR TREATMENT. NEVER DISREGARD PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE, OR DELAY IN SEEKING IT, BECAUSE OF SOMETHING YOU HAVE READ IN THIS PUBLICATION. NEVER RELY ON INFORMATION IN THIS PUBLICATION IN PLACE OF SEEKING PROFESSIONAL MEDICAL ADVICE. EPOCH HEALTH DOES NOT RECOMMEND OR ENDORSE ANY SPECIFIC TESTS, PRODUCTS, PROCEDURES, OPINIONS OR OTHER INFORMATION THAT MAY BE PROVIDED IN THIS PUBLICATION. [SEE ADDITIONAL INFORMATION.](#)

To ensure we reach the high standards of reliability and neutrality that you expect from us, we are engaging with Ad Fontes Media to analyze our content. If you find an article you think falls short of the standard, please submit the link through this form.

Copyright © 2000 - 2025 The Epoch Times Association Inc. All Rights Reserved.