



## *Knit one, purl one:* Knitting isn't just for grandma – at least it shouldn't be!

Learning how to knit might not be at the top of your fall to-do list, but after you read about the wide variety of benefits that reach far beyond having a new sweater, you might want to pick up a pair of knitting needles. Recent studies have found a strong connection between knitting and feelings of calm and happiness – both of which we all could use more of in our lives.

A recent article published by *The New York Times* stated that the act of knitting can indeed provide serious health benefits, both mental and physical. Lowering blood pressure? Staving off the effects of arthritis? Slowing memory loss? Feeling a little skeptical that picking up a pair of

knitting needles can help you live longer and feel happier? Read on.

### **Knitting can alleviate symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression**

According to one study, a strong connection was found between knitting and feelings of calm and happiness. The rhythmic motions and the sense of focus that it takes can help distract from symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression. Sitting still to knit reduces your heart rate, lowers your blood pressure, and reduces harmful levels of the stress hormone cortisol after just a few minutes. Knitting

can induce a relaxed state with the same benefits that are associated with mediation, tai chi, and yoga – except you get a blanket at the end!

### **It can help improve motor skills**

When we are knitting, our entire brain is being stimulated at once – the frontal lobe (processing, attention and planning), the parietal lobe (sensory information and spatial navigation), the occipital lobe (visual information), the temporal lobe (memories and interprets language and meaning) and the cerebellum (precision and timing of movement). Because of this, knitting can be used in therapies to help people with diseases such as Parkinson's to improve their motor functions. The added benefit, as it helps to improve their fine motor skills, it also distracts from the many other painful symptoms of this disease.

### **Knitting can slow the effects of cognitive decline**

While knitting helps to improve motor skills and mood, it also stimulates your brain to keep it healthy. Use it or lose it? Yes! The more we use it, the healthier it becomes. The Mayo Clinic did a pretty big study on this and found that seniors who engage in any type of crafts are 30-50% less likely to have cognitive impairment and memory loss than those who do not. Something as simple as knitting can go a long way toward improving mental health as we age.

### **It helps with arthritis**

As anyone who suffers with arthritis pain and stiffness knows, it's important to keep our joints moving to keep them in top working order. Gently using our fingers, as one would in knitting, builds up the cartilage and makes it stronger instead of like more impactful activities that wear it down. This can lessen discomfort and symptoms of arthritis moving forward. If you already suffer from arthritis,



try soaking your hands in warm water first and try using larger knitting needles that may be easier for you to handle.

### **Knitting can boost self-esteem**

There's nothing quite like creating an item from scratch with your hands to help you feel good about yourself. Showing off something you've knitted to someone who does not is likely to look quite impressive and will bring lots of compliments. For those with low self-esteem, seeing everything come together from nothing can be a very rewarding experience, and provide a much needed boost of confidence. While yoga and mediation provide some of the same relaxing benefits (and should be continued to be practiced) knitting does something that neither will: It provides a tangible good in the form of a hat, scarf, or sweater.

### **It can help with depression**

Lately many people have been feeling down and are experiencing depression. The relaxing benefits of knitting, and focusing on something positive can help our minds from focusing on more negative, time-consuming thoughts.

### **Knitting can help people manage chronic pain**

Since it does require focus, knitting can decrease feelings of chronic pain by helping the brain re-focus on the positive while reducing a person's experience of pain. Because it's a low-intensity activity, it can be ideal for those who are trying to cope with painful, chronic conditions such as cancer.

### **It can build friendships**

Knitting can help you be a part of a community. Multiple studies have shown that maintaining social relationship is critical as we age, and knitting is a great starting point for doing this. Joining a knitting groups, attending craft shows, and showing off your projects, you can make new friends along the way. Also, speaking of community, there are en-



tire online communities focused on knitting that you can become involved in from the safety of your home.

Now that you know all about the benefits of knitting and want to give it a try, ask your caregiver to help you with picking up some supplies at your local craft store. If you don't know how to knit, perhaps your caregiver does and can show you how to start. If you're unable to attend a class, the internet is a great resource. YouTube and Pinterest have countless free knitting tutorials.

Once you know what you're doing, knitting can be very relaxing. With all of the potential health benefits, it's a low-cost activity that's easy for virtually everyone to enjoy. Manage your pain, feel happier, and stay active as you age all while producing some truly one-of-a-kind wearable items for yourself and your friends and family!



3		9	2	8				5
			9		6			
5			3	1				9
9	2				1	3		7
6	7						5	2
8		5	7				9	6
7				3	5			4
			4		8			
4				7	9	6		8

September is

## AFib Awareness Month

Atrial fibrillation (commonly known as AFib or AF) can occur in anyone, and many people have this condition and are not even aware they have it. The symptoms of AFib – a racing pounding heart that happens for no reason, shortness of breath with light physical activity, feelings of light-headedness or dizziness, and unusual fatigue should not be ignored.

AFib is an irregular heartbeat (arrhythmia) which the muscles of the heart fail to contract in its usual strong, rhythmic fashion. When a heart is in this irregular quivering rhythm, it may not be pumping enough oxygen-rich blood out. This blood can possibly begin to pool inside the heart. When blood pools, a clot can form. When this clot is finally pumped out of the heart, it can become lodged inside the arteries, potentially causing a stroke. A blocked artery prevents the tissue on the other side from receiving this oxygen-rich blood, and without oxygen, tissue will die. AFib can also lead to heart failure and other heart-related conditions.

According to the American Heart Association, at least 2.7 million Americans are living with AFib. Some people have no symptoms at all, and yet they carry a five-times greater risk of stroke. Often times this condition is diagnosed at a regular checkup or discovered by a healthcare provider listening to their heart as they're being seen for other illnesses. This is another reason regular medical check-ups are a vital part of keeping our bodies healthy.

If you or a loved one has AFib, visit [heart.org](http://heart.org) to learn more about it and why treatment can save lives, and to find out how to lower your risks and live a healthy life.

## Sudoku:

The aim of Sudoku is to complete the entire grid using the numbers 1-9. Each number can only be used once in each row, once in each column, and once in each of the 3x3 boxes. This puzzle is EASY!

Visit [www.krazydad.com](http://www.krazydad.com) for further tips and help about how to play – and good luck!

*Sudoku puzzle courtesy of [www.krazydad.com](http://www.krazydad.com)*



# Simply Delicious

## GROUND TURKEY SLOPPY JOES

Turkey is a leaner sub-in for ground beef, and iron-rich sourdough bread packs more of a protein punch than your standard sugary hamburger bun.

– *courtesy of countryliving.com*

**Total Time:** 30 mins; **Yield:** 6 servings

### Ingredients

- 2 tbsp. olive oil
- 1 medium yellow onion, chopped
- 1 red bell pepper, chopped
- 1 carrot, chopped
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper
- 2 cloves garlic, pressed
- 1 lb. lean ground turkey or chicken
- 1 tbsp. chili powder
- 1/4 tsp. ground cinnamon
- 1 (8-ounce) can tomato sauce
- 1/4 c. sweet relish
- 2 tsp. Worcestershire sauce
- 2 tbsp. red wine vinegar, divided
- 3 Persian cucumbers, thinly sliced
- 1/2 c. thinly sliced red onion
- 6 thick slices toast or split burger buns

### Directions

- Heat oil in a large skillet over medium heat. Add yellow onion, bell pepper, and carrot. Season with salt and pepper. Cook, stirring occasionally, until tender, 6 to 8 minutes. Add garlic and cook, stirring occasionally, until fragrant, 30 seconds. Add turkey and cook, breaking it up with a spoon, until no longer pink, 4 to 6 minutes. Add chili powder and cinnamon. Cook, stirring occasionally, 1 minute. Add tomato sauce and relish. Simmer until beginning to thicken, 2 to 4 minutes. Stir in Worcestershire and 1 tablespoon vinegar.
- Toss together cucumbers, red onion, and remaining



tablespoon vinegar in a bowl. Season with salt. Let sit, tossing occasionally, 4 to 6 minutes. Spoon meat mixture on top of toast and top with pickles.

## EASY APPLESAUCE CAKE

Mix it up right in the pan: no mixing bowls required!

**Prep Time:** 10 mins; **Cook Time:** 30 mins; **Yield:** 12 pieces

### Ingredients

- 1 ¼ cups all-purpose flour
- 2/3 cup firmly packed cup brown sugar
- 1 teaspoon ground cinnamon
- ¾ teaspoon baking powder
- ¾ teaspoon baking soda
- ¼ teaspoon kosher salt
- 1 egg
- ½ cup olive oil
- ½ cup plain Greek yogurt
- ½ cup unsweetened applesauce (or homemade applesauce)
- 1 teaspoon vanilla extract
- Powdered sugar, for dusting

### Directions

- Preheat the oven to 350F. Grease an 8-inch square baking pan. Put the flour, brown sugar, cinnamon, baking powder, baking soda, and salt into the baking pan. Use a fork to thoroughly mix the ingredients together.
- Use your hands to make a hole in the center of the dry ingredients. Into the hole, crack the egg and add the olive oil, yogurt, applesauce, and vanilla. Use a fork to mix the ingredients together until smooth and blended. Smooth the top of the batter with the side of a butter knife.
- Bake until the cake is fairly firm when you press lightly at its center and a toothpick inserted in the middle has no wet batter sticking to it, 25 to 30 minutes.
- Remove from the oven and leave on the counter to cool completely, 1 hour. Leave the cake in the pan. Dust with powdered sugar. Cut into pieces and use a small spatula to lift them from the pan.