

US doctor lists 7 hobbies linked to reduced stress and better mental health

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What if the things you do just for fun do more than entertain you? Hidden beneath the laughter, focus, and movement is a powerful effect on your mind and body. According to **US-based physician Dr. Mark Hyman**, certain hobbies are associated with *less stress and better mental health*. Here are the seven he highlights:

- 1. Gardening**
Spending time gardening has been shown to help regulate cortisol (the stress hormone) and increase vitamin D from sunlight, which can improve mood and well-being.
- 2. Fishing**
Recreational fishing is linked with lower perceived stress, improved focus, and a deep sense of calm from being outdoors. Studies suggest “active anglers” have notably lower psychological distress than non-anglers.
- 3. Creating Art**
Activities like painting, drawing, and crafting can reduce anxiety, help express emotions, and improve mood. Research shows creative hobbies can lower stress hormones and provide a sense of accomplishment.
- 4. Aquarium Watching**
Observing fish or aquariums can calm the nervous system, lower heart rate, and promote relaxation — offering stress-relief even without active engagement.
- 5. Dancing**
Dance combines movement, music, and often social interaction — all of which are powerful tools for reducing stress, improving mood, and enhancing overall well-being.
- 6. Reading**
Reading isn’t just entertainment — it can be a powerful stress reducer. Studies have shown that just a few minutes of reading can significantly lower stress, slow heart rate, and ease muscle tension.
- 7. Socializing**
Face-to-face interactions strengthen emotional connections, reduce feelings of loneliness, and support mental health more strongly than digital communication alone.