

# 7 Healthy Hobbies Experts Say Could Help You Live Longer and Feel Better

## Who knew gardening could be so beneficial to your health?

Hobbies aren't just a fun way to pass the time. They can boost productivity, spark creativity, and even promote longevity. We've rounded up a list of the healthy hobbies experts say can help you live longer.

Activities like crafting, learning an instrument, and gardening can keep your brain active, which is crucial for people of all ages. "This is not a nice-to-have, it's essential for well-being in longevity," explains Kerry Burnight M.D., author of the *New York Times* bestseller *Joyspan: The Art and Science of Thriving in Life's Second Half*.

## Here are the best hobbies for longevity, according to experts.

### 1. Gardening

Deborah Kado M.D., co-director of the Stanford Longevity Center and chief of research for the Geriatrics Section at Stanford University School of Medicine has been caring for older adults for almost 30 years. One of the hobbies that she has observed that may be associated with healthy longevity is gardening, because it's done with a purpose or goal of cultivating something to grow.

### 2. Get Physical

For a longer and healthier life, Jessica Shepherd, M.D., MBA, FACOG, and chief medical officer at Hers, suggests incorporating resistance training into your daily movements to improve brain health and muscle strength, while also helping to maintain your body's glucose levels.

Kado says incorporating regular physical activity into your day, like dancing, swimming, hiking or walking may also be associated with healthy longevity. She adds that once you've done it, you'll likely feel better about the day.

### 3. Singing or playing an instrument

Two other hobbies Kado has observed that may be associated with healthy longevity are singing or playing a musical instrument. She adds that making music is about learning, creating something and enjoying the process. Research also supports that engaging in these activities may actually keep the brain young.

### 4. Socialize

Sharing a social activity with someone else regularly, at least once a week, is another hobby Kado suggests may be associated with healthy longevity.

The Fisher Center for Alzheimer's Research Foundation adds that social interactions are "critical for healthy aging."

## **5. Volunteer**

Whether you're interested in working with kids, caring for homeless animals, or even working with marine life like dolphins and sea turtles, there's a volunteer opportunity just waiting for you.

In fact, according to a *Journal of Health Psychology* review, people who are 70 and older and volunteer frequently tend to live longer than those who don't.

## **6. Arts + Crafts**

Get the creative juices flowing by adding some good ol' fashioned arts and crafts to your hobbies. Take up painting, knitting, crocheting, photography, or anything else that tickles your fancy and create your masterpiece. Just like singing and playing a musical instrument, studies show arts and crafts are mentally stimulating, which in turn helps keep the brain sharp.

## **7. Get some sleep**

Who says sleeping can't be a hobby? Shepherd says that improving our sleep habits and patterns can help decrease chronic morbidity and diseases, improve mindfulness and reset the mitochondria.

Additionally, the Mayo Clinic reports recent research shows men who get a good night's sleep live about five years longer than those who don't; for women, it's two years.