

My Story 004

Since March 2007, Stitchlinks have been asking people to tell us their Story, and also asking whether knitting and stitching has been helpful to them.

All Stories are voluntarily offered and anonymity is guaranteed. Only once we have been given permission do we publish so that others can appreciate, take inspiration and draw comfort from them.

This booklet is one of a series that contains a small selection taken at random from the long list of Stories we have received. Each is reproduced as it was entered on the online survey form, with the only exception of taking out any way that individuals can be identified.

Read at your leisure and be fascinated, comforted, thrilled, encouraged and inspired.

You are not alone.

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Story 12

“...it also gave me pride in achieving a small piece of 'art'...”

My story started many years ago. I liked having a 'drink' - but unfortunately my body starting to crave for alcohol and eventually the cravings were daily and then hourly!

To cut a long story short, I joined Alcoholics Anonymous over four years ago and with the help of the Fellowship and knitting and then cross stitching I haven't had a drink since! I am not saying that stitching help me solely - but it definately gave me something to think about instead of alcohol and it also gave me pride in achieving a small piece of 'art'.

My family and friends are so impressed that I am recovering from the illness and Joining Stitchlinks was another step - and thankyou for all you help and encouragement in changing my life.

I log on regularly and get so much out of the communication between fellow stitchers. Good luck with the questionnaire and if you know of anyone I could help (or even just chat to regarding the illness I don't mind you giving them my e.mail address)
Regards, < XXX XXX >

Story 208

“...it somehow makes me feel more at ease with the world...”

I have been very ill after a complete nervous breakdown. I couldn't do anything for a very long time.

Gradually I started making myself do things, first jigsaws, then tapestry, and then I resumed my favourite hobby of knitting. Whenever I feel anxious or depressed or scared about something I sit down and focus on knitting and it makes me feel I'm doing something worthwhile, creative and productive.

I knit every day and make myself follow the most challenging patterns to get better and better, and I depend on knitting to keep me going every day. It's calming, has some repetition in it to focus on, and it somehow makes me feel more at ease with the world. I think the calming effect is the most significant thing about it. And it makes me feel somehow secure.

It's difficult to explain, but without it I would have never come as far as I have in recovery.

Story 234

“Once I learned about English knitting it took less than an hour for me to learn the basics.”

I'm 32 years old, and my grandmother only started paying attention to me when I learned to knit 3 years ago.

She's always been very standoffish, more interested in my aunt's children than my mother's because she didn't approve of my parent's marriage. My mother taught me to crochet when I was 5 or 6, and I spent a good chunk of my adolescence churning out granny squares and making afghans. I also learned to needlepoint, cross stitch, and basic sewing, but none of things ever impressed my grandmother.

She tried to teach me to knit once when I was 11, but she only knew how to knit Continental. I couldn't figure out how to grab the yarn with the smooth needle after so much time using a crochet hook, so I gave up on it for nearly 20 years. In 2004 my marriage took a nosedive and I asked my husband to move out. The stress was unbearable and I needed something to keep my mind off of how miserable I was, so I picked up "Stitch n Bitch" on a whim.

Once I learned about English knitting it took less than an hour for me to learn the basics. Within 3 months I was using double-pointed needles and making socks. My marriage slowly got better as did my knitting. With crochet I never progressed much past blankets and table runners and learning to read a pattern completely intimidated me. Knitting felt more approachable the patterns easier to decipher. Nothing felt out of reach: I created hats purses toys dishcloths scarves and even some more unusual things like uterus (uterii?).

The first time I showed my grandmother something I knit - a small bear I think - her eyes lit up and it seemed like she really looked at me for the first time. She talked me more that visit than I ever remember her doing before and about more personal subjects. Since then she's given me all of her old pattern books and magazines and shown me where she keeps her needles so I can have them when she dies (she's in her 80's and not in great health). She's also given me her quilting frame and tried to teach me to use it but my attention span isn't that great and it feels unweildy. Nowadays every time we speak she asks me what I'm working on and often asks me to make her specific things like dishcloths or placemats. She calls me far more often than she ever did before even after my daughter was born. One of her other granddaughters knits but not as well as I do and so I seem to have become the Chosen Heiress of the Craft.

I guess it's only fair since my cousin got more of our grandmother's attention when we were younger but there's still a little bit of bitterness that it took me becoming interested in something that she loved in order for me to get her to become involved and interested in my life.

Story 167

“I find cross stitch and knitting very relaxing.”

I find cross stitch and knitting very relaxing. They help me to relax after a stressful day, whilst keeping my hands busy and stopping me from being bored.

I have a tendency to eat due to boredom or stress, and having sewing or knitting to do takes my mind off this. The cravings usually go away, mainly because I have something to occupy myself with but also because I know that if I did snack I would risk marking my work.

I have suffered from depression at various times, and have found sewing and knitting relaxing and calming.

Story 227

“....I can just let go of everything I've been carrying around all day”

I took up knitting again a few years ago and since having a baby knitting has been a fantastic way for me to relax.

It's more than that though. When I have had a particularly stressful or difficult day, within a few minutes of picking up my needles to start working, I can actually feel all the tension just fade out of me. I become totally focused on the rhythm of my hands and I can just let go of everything I've been carrying around all day.

I really wish I'd taken it up years ago when I was suffering from depression because I think it would have probably helped me a lot more than medication.

Telling Your Story helps others to appreciate their own circumstances. Please help by completing the survey at www.Stitchlinks.com