

Why Knitting?

- The hands – (a) Is the hand / brain link special? (b) Do hand movements continue to influence cognitive development? (c) Good, productive hand exercise.
- Movements – (a) Bilateral, alternating coordinated (b) Rhythmic, repetitive (c) Automatic. (d) Bimanual movt – role in inhibition? Are these hand movements facilitating a meditative state or changing the brain?
- Creativity – a means of introducing creativity in a ‘safe’ way - making reward predictable. Does improving creative/lateral thought improve the ability to self manage?
- Portability – kits deliverable to arm chair, bed and socially acceptable to use out and about. Many are already using knitting to control/cure panic attacks, anxiety, agoraphobia, panic at the onset of asthma attack.
- Kits – delivered to patients without posing increased workload on healthcare workers.
- Learning process involves no wasted materials – cost effective.
- Not messy to set up – can be done in bed and picked up and dropped as required so good for carers too.
- Requires no artistic ability – reward is attainable. Provides the ‘safe’ structure required by those suffering from depression, low self esteem/confidence, but this structure can be withdrawn as confidence improves.
- Can be done alone at home or within a group setting – has the potential to ‘change’ the home environment enabling positive experiences between / post treatment times.
- Reward / Success – stimulation of reward system. Many with long term illness have little in their lives that gives them any feelings of success or reward.
- Stimulation – visual / tactile / emotional (anticipation / excitement). What role does colour and texture play? Colour appears to have a profound effect particularly on the depressed.
- Control / Purpose / Occupation
- Mastery / Skill – “I feel able not disabled. Valid not invalid”
- Helps to build a new, positive identity / Self esteem
- Prevents frustration during enforced rest periods – for those pacing or on bed rest. Enables productivity during these times. Often used by pregnant women on enforced bed rest.
- Teaches patience, perseverance and collaboration – teaches success is possible despite mistakes along the way. Important lesson in our ‘quick fix’ world. Important for health and education.
- Gifts made for family / friends / charity – enables contribution. Gives a place in society.
- Gives a sense of belonging to a community – face-to-face and online groups see ability and skill not disability.
- Opens up the world - knitters have to make contact with the outside world and other skills, such as posting photos on forums are also learnt.
- Cuts across class, culture, language – widely accessible to people from all backgrounds.
- Can be learnt from pictures and DVDs.
- The common interest in a group builds cohesion amongst participants from diverse backgrounds. Makes it easier to integrate into the group and initiate conversations with strangers. Groups in London meet in pubs and clubs making it easier for those who are lonely to attend.