

# Knit or Crochet to Relax?

By Comfort for Critters

Yes, it's true. Studies have shown, and all of us crafters know, that knitting and crocheting can be a huge stress reliever. I've personally heard this from many volunteers...that it's a way for them to relax and unwind after a long day. But is this effect real or imagined?

Any repetitive activity can help calm the mind. A rhythmic chant in medication is replaced by the cadence of clicking knitting needles. It can help to clear the mind of worries, concerns and nagging thoughts, as you focus on row, after row, after row. I've heard from volunteers that they enjoy picturing the pet which will receive the blanket they are making. As they stitch bright red treble-crochets, they think about that jet black cat who will shine, as they sleep on this blankie.

Crafting a blanket is also a unique source of accomplishment, in a world that can be stingy on delivering this feeling. Few jobs deliver this, or even extracurricular activities. Most tasks need to be done, and redone. It's unusual to be able to sit back and just take in something that's "done" (never to be done the exact way again). A completed blanket is something you can hold in your hands, knowing you are making a tangible difference to a homeless pet (and their forever family).

There's also a wonderful feeling that comes from mixing colors, trying new stitches and just plain being creative. I'm often asked if a different kind of yarn can be used, if the shape or size can be changed or even if a new method can be used to create a blanket. My answer is consistently "yes", followed by a "please do!" Being able to follow your creative inspiration and experiment without worry is a wonderfully freeing feeling. I love that our volunteers can feel this with every blanket they make!

Recently, schools have begun knitting instruction for kids who would like to fine-tune their ability to focus. It helps them slow down, concentrate and accomplish a clear goal. Teachers find this translates to higher test scores, as they use the same ability to focus on assignments and tests.

For kids, it's also a great way to demonstrate the importance trying something new, persevering until you figure it out and when all else fails unwinding your mistakes and starting fresh! Not many activities let you do that!

So is it the magic elixir for de-stressing or is it all in our head? I wonder if it really matters....

Does it matter to you?

[www.ComfortForCritters.org](http://www.ComfortForCritters.org)