

Resilience in the Making:

Hobbies

Welcome everyone! My name is Renee Dell'Acqua and I'm a Senior Health Educator in Health Promotion Services here at UC San Diego.

On this episode of Live Well Be Well, I'll be discussing how engaging in your favorite hobbies can actually strengthen your resilience! And if you don't have a hobby just yet, we'll talk about ways that you can discover one or maybe even more!

So I hope you get inspired, I hope you feel connected, and I hope you discover new ways to live your best life. Let's get started!

For a long time, I held the misguided and inaccurate perception of hobbies. I felt like they were almost an interference in my productivity and that it took time away from things that were "more important." I would even feel a sense of guilt for not putting my time to better use, or so I thought.

But as I began to reflect on the role that hobbies play in our lives and the benefits I've seen them produce for myself and others, especially when it comes to our sanity, I began to realize that hobbies are meant to bring us joy, to lift us up, to take our minds off of our stressors, and often times, to act as a form of relaxation. So when we really think about it, hobbies are essentially an act of self-care and self-love, and what's more productive than that? When we devote time to ourselves by engaging in activities that make us happy, make us feel relaxed, and allow us to live in the present moment – we are essentially saying that we're important and our health and well-being matter to us.

So as you can imagine, the role hobbies play in resilience is multifaceted. Research shows that hobbies provide a healthy outlet for coping with stress, they can lead to feeling a sense of accomplishment and fulfillment which can then

boost our self-esteem and confidence, they can improve our mental health outcomes such as reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety, and overall, they can increase our positive emotions. All of which help us strengthen our resilience.

And a really cool thing about hobbies is that it's not only an avenue to bring joy and relaxation into our lives, but hobbies also incorporate such diverse activities that it can tap into multiple parts of our health and well-being. As you may recall, holistic well-being includes areas of ourselves such as our physical, mental, emotional, social, and intellectual well-being, to name just a few. So here are some examples of activities that can tap into these various areas of our wellness. For instance, physical hobbies may include activities like yoga, hiking, or weight-lifting. Mental and emotional hobbies might be things like journaling, meditation, or expressing ourselves through creative outlets like drawing or photography. Hobbies that tap into our intellectual selves may be things like putting a puzzle together, playing a musical instrument, or learning a new language. Social hobbies are things like joining a running club or book club, playing intramural sports, or volunteering. These are just a few examples to illustrate that hobbies not only bring us joy, but they can also support and strengthen our health and well-being in multiple areas.

So now that we know the benefits of hobbies, let's talk about how we can incorporate them into our lives. If you already have hobbies, you're on the right path. The key is to making time for those hobbies. If you're like my former self where you feel guilty for not putting time towards things that are "more important," always remember that hobbies are a form of self-care and self-love so when we make time for hobbies, we're making time for ourselves and that's always going to be productive. And if you don't currently have hobbies, here are some ways to help you discover ones that are right for you:

Tip #1: Think about activities you already love doing or personal interests you already have and see if that can be transformed into a hobby. For example, do you love walking your dog and you love animals in general? Maybe there's an animal shelter or wildlife refuge you can volunteer at.

Tip #2: Think about activities you loved doing as a child. Maybe you loved to ride your bike around the neighborhood, perhaps your new hobby could be cycling. Or maybe you loved playing flag football or kickball during recess, perhaps there's an adult league you can join. Maybe you were obsessed with finger-painting. Perhaps you can try painting.

Tip #3: Just try new things and see what sticks. For instance, if you think you might like journaling, find a notebook or some sheets of paper and start writing down your thoughts. Or find prompts online to help initiate the writing process. Or maybe you're interested in yoga, check out some of the awesome and free yoga classes that are available online to help you get you started. With Tip #3, be sure to check out the Zone's website thezone.ucsd.edu or our social media accounts @ucsdzone for fun opportunities that may help in your discovery of hobbies that work for you!

With all of that, I have several requests for you: (1) I'd like you to reflect on your hobbies and/or discover new potential hobbies, (2) I'd like you to figure out how you can set aside time each day or week to devote to your hobbies, and (3) most importantly, reflect on and even write down why it's important to make time for your hobbies. Once you have that written down, put that note in a place where you'll see it often as a reminder for yourself. To close, I hope you all engage in and discover hobbies that spark joy, that lift you up, and that make you feel good because you all deserve that in your life!

So that concludes this episode of Live Well, Be Well! If you like what you heard today and would like to learn more about topics related to health and wellness, there's much more to come!

Please be sure to check out our website healthpromotionservices.ucsd.edu and also follow us on Instagram and Facebook under @ucsdhps. Stay tuned for our next episode of Live Well, Be Well. Until next time, be kind, be true, be you. And remember, to be well is to live well.