



The Importance of Play

FOR CHILDREN AND ADULTS!

In our busy, on-the-go lives, many of us focus so much on work and family commitments that we never seem to have time for good old fashion fun. Somewhere between childhood and adulthood, we stopped playing. But play is not just essential for kids; it can be an important source of relaxation and stimulation for adults as well.

5 Benefits of Play:



1) Stress Relief. Play is fun and can trigger the release of endorphins, the body's natural feel-good chemicals. Endorphins promote an overall sense of well-being and can even temporarily relieve pain.

2) Improved brain function. Playing chess, completing puzzles, or pursuing other fun activities that challenge the brain can help prevent memory problems and improve brain function. The social interaction of playing with family and friends can also help ward off stress and depression.

3) Stimulate the mind and boost creativity. Young children often learn best when they are playing—a principle that applies to adults, as well. You'll learn a new task better when it's fun and you're in a relaxed and playful mood. Play can also stimulate your imagination, helping you adapt and solve problems.

4) Improve relationships and your connection to others. Sharing laughter and fun can foster empathy, compassion, trust, and intimacy with others. Play doesn't have to include a specific activity; it can also be a state of mind. Developing a playful nature can help you loosen up in stressful situations, break the ice with strangers, make new friends, and form new business relationships.

5) Keep you feeling young and energetic. In the words of George Bernard Shaw, "We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing." Play can boost your energy and vitality and even improve your resistance to disease, helping you function at your best.





Ways to Play More!

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Brene Brown describes play as doing things just because they're fun and not because they'll help achieve a goal. Play is vital to human development and at the core of creativity and innovation. Here are some ways to become a more playful person:



Have a regular game night with friends, family or whoever is in your cohort.



Play with a pet.

Puppies, especially, make very willing playmates. If you don't have your own, offer to take a family member's pooch for a walk.

Surround yourself with playful people. They'll help loosen you up and are more likely to support your efforts to play and have fun.

Spend time in a park or the coulees throwing a Frisbee or flying a kite.

Joke with people at a bus stop or in a checkout line. It'll make the time pass quicker and you may even brighten someone's day!

Visit a magic store and learn some tricks. Or, if possible, invest in art supplies, construction toys, or science kits and create something new.



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