

The Knitting Revival: A Quest for Life Purpose?

A little over a year ago, a study conducted by the British-based Ordnance Survey discovered that many Brits believe [basic life skills](#) are becoming extinct. The skills in decline ranged from reading a map, to writing in cursive, to baking bread from scratch.

But one of the items on the list may not be disappearing as fast as many believe. That item is knitting. According to a [recent article](#) in the *Boston Globe*, “Knitflixing” – the practice of quietly working on a knitting project while watching movies on Netflix – has grown popular in recent years.

At first blush, such a practice seems to be just another eye-rolling example of society’s dependence on an entertainment lifestyle. But as the *Globe* reports, the trend may actually be born out of a recognition and desire to redeem that addicting dependence on technology:

“‘If I don’t have a project that I’m working on, I’ll find myself aimlessly picking up my phone, and then 10 minutes will pass, and I’ll have no idea what happened on the show,’ says Olivia Baxter, 22, a knitting enthusiast who works as a marketing coordinator in Boston.

... [Knitter Christina] Fagan ... explains it this way:

‘If I’m knitting a sweater,’ she says, ‘it makes me feel a little better about watching ‘The Wire’ during an entire beautiful weekend.’”

Americans are prone to justifying technology use by explaining their need for a little time away to rest, relax, and simply

vegetate without thinking about the cares of life. But as the above examples seem to indicate, Americans are beginning to realize that such a state doesn't recharge, but instead leaves them with a lack of purpose and fulfillment. Making technology the "background music" to a handicraft, however, brings far more meaning to life.

And engaging in basic skills like handicrafts can bring benefits beyond purpose and fulfillment. According to a *New York Times* [article](#) earlier this year, basic skills such as knitting can provide many health benefits, including greater cognitive function, stress and pain relief, and longer life.

Schools today place great emphasis on helping kids get a head start in technology usage. But given these insights, is it possible that we would have healthier, happier, more relaxed, and more productive children if we focused on instilling basic skills such as knitting, cooking, and other handiwork skills instead?

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