



With mindfulness and mental health being such a **prevalent** issue in our society today, it's no surprise that hobbies have become a popular **pastime** to help **occupy** our minds from **negative** thoughts and thinking. From exercise to reading, hobbies are one of the best ways to **promote** mindfulness allowing one to relax, **unwind**, and have that important time to ourselves. Not only can hobbies make you feel happier through spending time doing what you enjoy - but they can actually improve your performance at work as well as have meditative **effects on** the brain. Dr Herbert Benson, a pioneer in mind/body medicine and author of "The Relaxation Response," says that the repetitive action of needlework can induce a relaxed state like that **associated with** meditation and yoga. Once you get beyond the initial learning curve, knitting and crocheting can lower heart rate and blood pressure and **reduce** harmful blood levels of the stress hormone cortisol. Knitting is the perfect hobby to **take up** to invest more in yourself.

1. Match the highlighted words in the text to their synonyms:
  - a. Harmful:
  - b. Start a habit:
  - c. Decrease:
  - d. Impact on:
  - e. Fill:
  - f. Leisure activity:

- g. Common:
- h. Relax:
- i. Connect:
- j. Support:

2. What can you learn from the passage?