Knitting has become part of everyday life for many people. Here at IAIA we are passionate about using knitting to improve your wellbeing. This practical advice will help to enhance your enjoyment of knitting, the benefits of which will help you live a more fulfilled life. These tips are based on Betsan Corkhill’s book Knit for Health and Wellness: How to Knit a Flexible Mind and More.

**KNITTING THERAPY BENEFITS**

- **It helps us to develop our creative thinking**
- The calming movements help tackle stress & anxiety, and help to raise mood even in those with depression.
- **It strengthens our social networks**
- It makes communication with others in a group easier.
- **It gives us satisfaction and improves our self-esteem**
- It helps calm emotions to help think through things.
- **It helps improve and maintain hand movements**

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**KNITTING THERAPY PATTERNS OF MOVEMENT**

- Bilateral
- Coordinated
- Cross Midline
- Repetitive
- Rhythmic
- Automatic

**HAND POSITION**

- Increases Personal Space
- Provides a Buffer

**ENRICHED ENVIRONMENT**

- Creativity / Imagination
- Meditation
- Relaxation
- Calm / Self Soothing
- Flow
- Mastery of a skill
- Regular Novelty
- Reward / Success
- Enjoyment of Solitude

**SOCIAL ENGAGEMENT**

- Community
- Friendship
- Support
- Belonging
- Touch
- Easy Banter
- Roaring Laughter
- Fun / Play with Others
- Experiment / Explore

**PORTABILITY**

Copyright: Stitchlinks (Betsan Corkhill)
**BEFORE KNITTING**
- Make sure you have good lighting.
- Make sure you know what all the abbreviations mean.
- Have all your knitting tools at hand.
- Look for a comfortable place to sit.
- Wear comfortable clothes that will enable you to relax.
- Have some water nearby and ensure you drink regularly.
- Avoid snacking, particularly sugary snacks, as you knit.

**AFTER KNITTING**
- Gentle hand exercises will help to keep your hands healthy:
  - Make a fist (1).
  - Stretch your fingers (2).
  - Circle your wrists one way, then repeat the other (3).
  - Interlace your fingers & gently stretch (4).

**DURING KNITTING**
- Let your mind with a relaxed grip flow into the rhythm of the hands.
- Spread short bouts of knitting across the day.
- Hold your needles with a relaxed grip.
- Make sure you're not sitting for prolonged periods. Every 30 mins stand up, walk around to get your circulation going.
- Take a break every 20-30 mins to stretch your hands, look at a distant object to prevent eye strain.

**KNIT TO IMPROVE WELLBEING**
- Apply hand moisturising cream to give your hands a treat.
- Tidy away your knitting and tools to keep them safe and to avoid tripping.