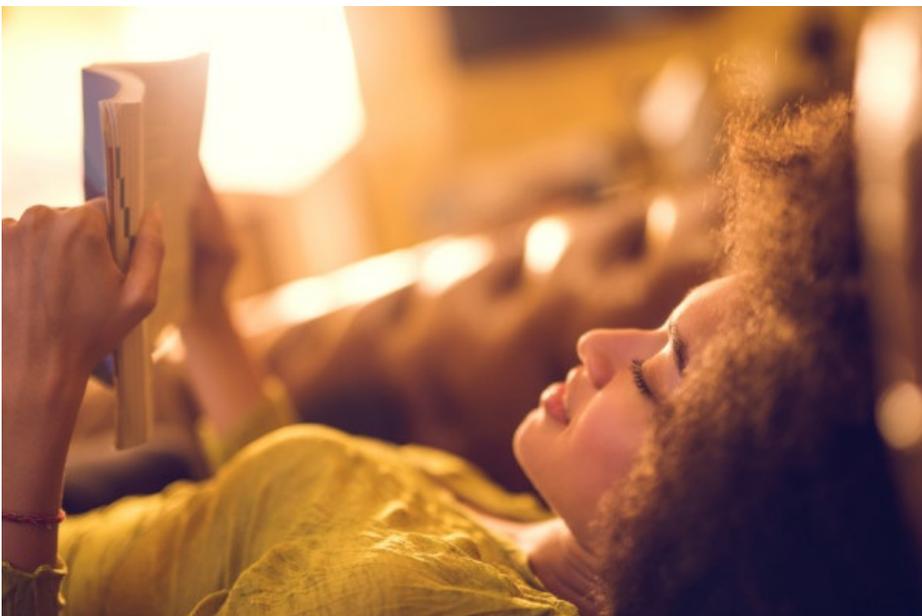


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 Margret Aldrich

## Good news for bookworms: 6 scientific reasons reading is good for you



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Could a chapter a day keep the doctor away?

A growing body of research finds that reading books has a range of health benefits, from improved brain function to better coping skills.

“People who read find it easier to make decisions, plan, and prioritize, and this may be because they are more able to recognize that difficulty and setback are unavoidable aspects of human life,” Dr. Josie Billington, deputy director of the Centre for Research into Reading at the University of Liverpool, [told Fast Company](#).

The next time you want to cancel your plans and curl up with a book, remind yourself that you may be doing yourself a favor. Here are six scientifically proven ways reading is good for your health and well-being, gleaned from [The Huffington Post](#), [Stylist](#) and [Real Simple](#):

**1. Less stress.** Feeling stressed out? Sitting down with a good book can help you relax – and it doesn’t take a huge time commitment. According to one [study](#), reading for just six minutes can reduce stress levels up to 68 percent.

**2. Sharper mind.** Reading has been linked to better brain health. [Research](#) shows that people who practice mentally stimulating activities like reading have a 32 percent lower rate of mental decline. Some studies even link reading with a [lower risk of Alzheimer’s](#) as you age.

**3. Better sleep.** By establishing a soothing bedtime routine that includes time to read and unwind, you’ll set yourself up for a good night’s sleep, [suggests the Mayo Clinic](#).

**4. Reduced depression.** People who read for pleasure report fewer feelings of depression than non-readers. In addition, reading

self-help books (also known as practicing “[bibliotherapy](#)”) can be part of an effective treatment for depression, [studies show](#).

**5. Brighter kids.** Sharing a bedtime story with your child may help increase their brain activity. “The more you read to your child the more you help the neurons in this region to grow and connect in a way that will benefit the child in the future,” [says researcher Tzipi Horowitz-Kraus](#), director of the Reading and Literacy Discovery Center at Cincinnati Children’s Hospital.

**6. Increased empathy.** Reading literary fiction – and getting to know the novel’s characters – can make it easier to relate to others and understand their emotions, according to research [published in Science](#).

Note: Although the jury is still out on whether you should pick up a print book or an electronic reader, print books are recommended for nighttime reading, so bright lights from electronic devices don’t interfere with the brain’s sleep signals. They are also considered the gold standard when it comes to [reading comprehension](#) and retention.

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