

Volunteering helps you live longer

26th August, 2013



Volunteering can make you happier and help you live longer, according to a new study. A research paper published on Friday in the journal BMC Public Health says doing good deeds

for others boosts your mental health and increases your longevity. Researchers from the UK's University of Exeter reviewed 40 academic papers into the effects of volunteerism on our health. They found that volunteers had lower rates of depression, an increased sense of well-being, and a 22 per cent reduction in the chances of dying within the next seven years. Australians lead the way in volunteering, with an estimated 36 per cent of the population lending a hand.

Lead researcher Dr Suzanne Richards said: "Our systematic review shows that volunteering is associated with improvements in mental health, but more work is needed to establish whether volunteering is actually the cause." She added: "It is still unclear whether biological and cultural factors and social resources that are often associated with better health and survival are also associated with a willingness to volunteer in the first place." In a separate study from the University of Michigan, researchers suggested three reasons why volunteering may be beneficial. First, it involves physical activity; second, the social connections we make help to reduce our stress; and third, it gives us a deep sense of happiness.

Sources: Daily Telegraph / Huffington Post / EveryDayHealth

Writing

There should be a law that makes everyone volunteer for something. Discuss.

Chat

Talk about these words from the article.

volunteering / journal / longevity / depression / well-being / chances / lending a hand / review / mental health / biological / cultural / reasons / physical activity / happiness /

True / False

- A new study says volunteering increases your longevity by 22 years. T / F
- Researchers looked at over 400 different studies into volunteering. T / F
- Volunteering reduces the chances of dying in the next seven years. T / F
- Australians seem to be the most willing volunteers. T / F
- A researcher said her work with volunteering was finished. T / F
- The researcher said biological factors create a willingness to volunteer. T / F
- A different study gave three possible reasons why people volunteer. T / F
- The second reason was that volunteering helps reduce stress. T / F

Synonym Match

- | | |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 1. deeds | a. likelihood |
| 2. boosts | b. evaluation |
| 3. rates | c. different |
| 4. chances | d. acts |
| 5. lending a hand | e. confirm |
| 6. review | f. increases |
| 7. establish | g. levels |
| 8. willingness | h. feeling |
| 9. separate | i. helping out |
| 10. sense | j. desire |

Discussion – Student A

- How important is volunteering?
- What things have you volunteered to do?
- How does volunteering make you feel?
- What do you think about what you read?
- Will you volunteer (more) now you know you can live longer?
- What are the best things to volunteer for?
- Should there be a law to get all of us to volunteer?
- How does volunteering change the world?

Phrase Match

- | | |
|--|-------------------------|
| 1. Volunteering can make you happier and | a. on our health |
| 2. doing good | b. to volunteer |
| 3. the effects of volunteerism | c. a hand |
| 4. Australians lead the | d. review |
| 5. 36% of the population lending | e. help you live longer |
| 6. systematic | f. cultural factors |
| 7. associated with improvements | g. deeds for others |
| 8. biological and | h. sense of happiness |
| 9. associated with a willingness | i. in mental health |
| 10. it gives us a deep | j. way in volunteering |

Discussion – Student B

- Is there anything bad about volunteering?
- Why are some people more willing to volunteer than others?
- From what age should people start volunteering?
- Are volunteers heroes?
- How is volunteering good for your future?
- Should volunteering be part of the curriculum in all schools?
- Do you think volunteering gives us "a deep sense of happiness"?
- What questions would you like to ask the head researcher?

Spelling

- gcroadinc to a new study
- increases your tyngeovil
- reviewed 40 aecciamd papers
- lower rates of insreopsed
- a 22 per cent tcdoueintr
- an etedaistm 36 per cent of the population
- Our itmytcaess review
- teesrpmimvon in mental health
- gclbaoiil and cultural factors
- teacdsiaos with better health
- a eseatapr study
- volunteering may be aienilebfc

Answers – Synonym Match

1. d	2. f	3. g	4. a	5. i
6. b	7. e	8. j	9. c	10. h

Role Play

Role A – Cleaning up a river

You think cleaning up a river is the best volunteer project. Tell the others 3 reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their projects. Tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): helping out in an animal shelter, lending a hand to restore an important building or planting trees.

Role B – Animal shelter

You think helping out in an animal shelter is the best volunteer project. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their projects. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): cleaning up a river, lending a hand to restore an important building or planting trees.

Role C – Restoring a building

You think lending a hand to restore an important building is the best volunteer project. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their projects. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): helping out in an animal shelter, cleaning up a river or planting trees.

Role D – Planting trees

You think planting trees is the best volunteer project. Tell the others three reasons why. Tell them things that are wrong with their projects. Also, tell the others which is the least useful of these (and why): helping out in an animal shelter, lending a hand to restore an important building or cleaning up a river.

Speaking – Volunteer

Rank these and share your rankings with your partner. Put the best causes at the top. Change partners often and share your rankings.

- an old people's home
- teach kids computer skills
- clean up a river
- raise cash for starving people
- animal shelter
- restore a local building
- town tour guide
- plant trees and flowers

Answers – True False

a	F	b	F	c	T	d	T	e	F	f	F	g	T	h	T
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Answers to Phrase Match and Spelling are in the text.