



Colouring-in good for mental health, study finds

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Colouring-in could improve your mental health, new research has shown.

A [University of Otago department of psychology](#) study published in the [Creativity Research Journal](#) showed daily colouring-in could improve some negative psychological conditions in adults.

Joint author [Dr Celia Lie](#) said 115 women aged 18 to 36 were given either a colouring-in booklet or a book of puzzles and asked to colour or work on the puzzles for 10 minutes a day.

After a week, those who had been colouring-in reported lower levels of depressive symptoms and anxiety.

Both groups showed a small increase in mindfulness which suggested that was not the driving factor behind the improvements in the depressive symptoms and anxiety in the colouring-in group, Lie said.

Lead author Jayde Flett said more research was needed because the study raised more questions around the relationship between colouring-in, mindfulness and changes in mental states.

"What is the mechanism responsible for the decrease in ill-being in the colouring-in group?"

"For example, it is often suggested that colouring-in induces a mindful or meditative state and is linked to reduced activity in the amygdala or changes in brain-wave activity.

"But we showed that mindful activity wasn't the driving factor of change because people who did the puzzles also became more mindful."

Joint author [Dr Tamlin Conner](#) said the research was an important first step in understanding the psychological benefits of colouring-in.

"Our findings bode well for the potential psychological benefits of colouring-in.

"In this way, colouring-in could be considered an act of everyday 'little c' creativity, in much the same way as gardening or gourmet cooking.

"With its low risk and accessibility, we feel comfortable adding colouring-in to the growing list of creative activities for improving mental health outcomes."

More information

- [Read original article in New Zealand Herald](#)
- [Mental health](#) tips and information on People First

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