# MS-Friendly Hobbies to Try (And Why You Should)

by ANGELA FINLAY

## MS-Friendly Hobbies to Keep You Busy, Happy and Healthy

Although it's a physical disease the symptoms of MS can wear on your spirits, especially when you have nothing else to think about. On the other hand, regular activity can entertain as well as heal: from stress relief and mental distraction to improved flexibility and comprehension, there are plenty of hobbies that not only fill your time, but can fulfill your life.

### Finding Fulfillment with MS

The intensity of your MS symptoms can fluctuate, and that can make it difficult to keep up a hobby. Your best bet will be to find something you look forward to practicing, something that can lift your spirits without fail. Not sure where to begin? Here are a few tips to finding a healing hobby that can change your life for the better:

**Focus on your strengths**. The more you excel at an activity, the more motivated you become. Think about what you've always been interested in, and see how that could translate into an activity to do once or twice a week.

**Keep at it**. Nobody will achieve perfection right from the start, so give yourself a break and keep practicing. Don't set any lofty goals or promises for your work, just let your mind and body learn at a comfortable, natural pace.

**Try as much as you can**. It's impossible to know where your disease will lead you, so try your hand at all sorts of things while you are able to do so. Try things you've always been interested in, but step outside your comfort zone as well – you may find a new and exciting interest.

### Good Hobbies for Good Health

When you live with MS, you live with discomfort. For those days when you're stuck in a chair but eager for some mental challenge or stimulation, consider these hobbies that respect your physical limits but activate your creativity and focus:

- **Knitting and needle arts**. Knitting and crocheting are pleasantly distracting, and even used as therapy in pain management programs. If you have good dexterity, try knitting, cross stitching, needle felting or needlepoint to create a nice piece of art or clothing. If needles are too fiddly for you, consider crochet, which you can perform with a single large hook and bulky yarn for an easy, quick and useable project.
- **Photography**. You don't need to travel beyond your home, and you would be surprised at how much fun you can have with a photo editing program on your computer. Using a simple digital camera, take some snapshots of still life compositions, upload them to Photoshop or another software program, and see how you can bring them to life.
- **Writing**. No professional training needed, and your only limit is your imagination. That said, it can be difficult to start writing without anything in mind, so invest in a writer's exercise book, or find a writing site online for some good starting points. Writing is also a great way to track your moods and progress as you

treat your MS.

- **Recycling**. If rules and parameters aren't for you, get into the "upcycling" game. Visit flea markets, yard sales and thrift stores for objects that can be updated and repurposed. Check out sites like Pinterest and Etsy for inspiration and creative takes on thrifty crafting.

There's no reason to limit yourself to just one hobby, nor should you simply use your hobby to eat up time. Despite your condition, you are capable of growth, creativity and enjoyment, and your quality of life will be better if you embrace these goals.