

Art & Brain Health

Myth: You need to be artistically talented to enjoy art and experience its health benefits.

What does the research say?

Research suggests that engaging in productive and enjoyable leisure activities can have many positive health and quality of life benefits for older adults. Engagement with the arts, in particular, is related to:

- Overall well-being
- Improved physical health
- Better morale and mood
- Maintaining brain health
- Fewer doctor visits and less medication use
- Improved social engagement



What does this mean for me? You don't need to have prior knowledge of the arts to meaningfully participate in art. You can bring the enjoyment of the arts into your daily life and improve your brain health. Consider participating in dance, theatre, writing, music, lifelong learning, culinary arts, and visual arts.

How do I apply this in my daily life?

- Take up dance lessons.
- Some cafés offer group painting activities – join one!
- Visit your local library to borrow books about art
- Stroll around an art museum or gallery



- Attend a gallery or museum-curated talk
- Take a culinary class
- Learn how to play an instrument, or listen to music
- Watch an opera, attend a concert, go to the symphony

Recommended Resources and Activities:

- You can use the [ArtontheBrain app](#) to learn about art with others.
- The MetOpera has a [televised series](#).
- Check with your local community centres like the YMCA.
- Universities and colleges may have arts-based continuing education courses.
- Music stores have listings for music instructors, and local music associations might host classes or events.
- Some museums have seniors' days and programs that are either subsidized or offered for less money.

Adapted from [ArtontheBrain](#) (2019), and Noice et al. (2013). Participatory arts for older adults: A review of benefits and challenges. *The Gerontologist* 54(5): 741.

