



## Gardening for Health: Benefits for Adults

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### Introduction to Gardening

There are many health benefits from gardening. Whether you choose to plant a small container gardening for herbs or you have a large inground row garden plot, all types of gardening can have a major impact on your health. Gardening can relieve stress, create social connections, increase social-emotional health, and more.

### Weed Out Stress

Gardening can help contribute to lower anxiety and depressive symptoms, lower your heart rate and cortisol levels (stress hormone), and increase positive emotions. Gardening has been found to increase levels of serotonin and dopamine – the “feel good” hormones in the brain. If you aren’t currently experiencing stress, you can still benefit mentally as gardening has been found to be restorative to all those who participate.

### Put the Community in Garden

Gardening can also help combat loneliness and isolation by creating social connections, which is more important as people age. Older adults are particularly vulnerable to feelings of loneliness and community gardens can create connections with neighbors and increase community spirit. Research shows that gardening can increase self-satisfaction by giving individuals a sense of purpose, and can help form better social networks.

### Grow Your Mind

Participating in vegetable gardening for at least twenty minutes helped improve brain nerve growth in individuals of all ages, which can help with memory. Gardening may possibly allow individuals to develop skills that could lead to potential employment opportunities, such as business, landscape, biology, and service. Grow yourself expression and creativity through growing your own garden.



### Romaine Healthy and Active

Having your own garden can be a low-cost way of feeding yourself and your family. Growing your own food increases the amount of fruits and vegetables you eat. Pulling, digging, reaching, and twisting as part of gardening is considered light aerobic exercise, which can help improve heart and lung health. Outside gardening in the sunshine has been found to increase Vitamin D levels and Vitamin D helps keep your bones, muscles, and teeth strong. Remember to wear sun protective clothing or apply sunscreen every two hours.

# References

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