

How Wood Carving Can Give You Mindfulness

Life can get a bit much at times. Occasionally, you just need to find something to take your mind off all the worries and give yourself a deserved break from life's travails. It doesn't help that this can stunt your creativity when you may well need it to move forward in life. One way you can achieve this is by picking up a piece of wood and decent knife and begin carving. If you didn't know it already; there is something about creative activities that will place you in a relaxed zone and clear your mind of stressful thoughts.

Woodworking or wood carving can be described as a "Whole-Brain" activity as it makes use of both the practical side of your brain in trying to realise what the creative mind has come up with. Also described as a state of "Flow" by psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi , a perfect immersive state of balance between skill and challenge, whilst using your body to make it happen.

An online survey conducted in a knitting community showed that taking part in creative crafts and occupations such as knitting, colouring, painting and woodwork can have tremendous impact on mental and also physical health. When people use these activities to relax or zone out, it is called active mindfulness. Unlike meditative mindfulness that puts all the focus on your thoughts, feelings and life, active mindfulness focuses on the physical and emotional feeling you are getting from the activity. Working with wood like this can interrupt the pattern of negative thoughts that can have a detrimental effect, and shift you to a place that gives you space for emotional respite and healing.

Woodworking is Peaceful Woodworking can be an intricate activity that works best with a focussed mind, being distracted may lead to a cut or a nick, so you'd better have your attention in the right place! Experienced woodworkers know about the calming aspect of wood working that beginners discover daily, peace of mind. Picking up that piece of scrap wood and turning it into the object in your mind's eye will help you block off all the negative thoughts that are causing you stress and anxiety. All you need is your tools, some lumber, and your mind focused on the craft; nothing more! And why not do it with some decent music or an audio book in the background to speed the calmness into your life.

Woodworking Requires Gentle Focus Wood carving is a delicate skill that forces you to slow things down a notch. The end product is a beautiful work of art that can only be achieved by having an end goal in mind. This means you have to be patient as you work on carving out the different designs and patterns on the wood just as you envisaged them in mind. This requires a high level of mindfulness; any minor mistake could mean that your long hours of bending down to work have been rendered useless. Wood whittling will definitely teach you something about taking it easy and thinking things through before making a decision. It's an abject lesson in patience without it being forced upon you.

Woodworking is Physical Woodworking can involve a whole slew of techniques, joints, and finishes that are required to come up with a complete work of wood art. It's an extensive list of techniques to make use of when making things, and add to that that you'll never stop learning and improving...EVER! The fact that you are using your hands to bring to life a creative thought that has solely been conceived in your mind proves that it doesn't get any more technical. Using your body in harmony with your thoughts is **Mindfulness in action**. This is especially true when you are dealing with complex designs and challenging angles. The implication is that you have to be very creative to achieve something that takes a lot of time and effort.

Woodworking is immensely satisfying Woodworking allows you to get rewarded with little victories. The effort, time, and skill that you put into the wood carving project can be very satisfying when you finally get to see the final product and appreciate that you have created something with your own hands.

Added bonus: If what you've made is a gift for someone else, you get to benefit from that gratitude and the act of giving. You can't lose!

So take a breath, let yourself have some time to just be, and let your hands work with your focussed mind on just one little piece of wood at a time. You'll feel so happy and balanced that you did. Stay mindful!