



MENTAL HEALTH

IT'S NEVER TOO LATE (OR TOO EARLY) TO SHARE THE PLEASURE OF READING

We know reading is good for our performance at school. But that makes it sound like a duty, not a pleasure. Reading for fun may be just as important, if not more – because otherwise you may stop reading altogether.

And there are many other benefits! As the UK learning resource Explore Learning explains, there's evidence “that reading for pleasure can increase empathy, improve relationships with others, reduce the symptoms of depression and improve wellbeing throughout life.”

“Research has also shown that students who choose what and where they read tend to be more motivated, read more and show greater language and literacy development.”

Reading with children – the earlier, the better

“There can be few things as powerful as regularly reading to a young child,” says the UK's National Literacy Trust, helping build “comfort and reassurance, confidence and security, relaxation, happiness and fun.”

“Giving a child time and full attention when reading them a story tells them they matter. It builds self-esteem, vocabulary, feeds imagination and even improves their sleeping patterns.”

“Reading to their infant is one of the greatest gifts parents can give.”

Is it too late to start if you don't enjoy reading?

You can develop a love for reading at any age.

The secret is to “find the right books”, says the reading website Mindjoggle. No need to read self-improvement books, classics, books recommended to you or anything else you're told. Remember, “you read for yourself and no one else”.

Book recommendations platform Off the Shelf offers these tips for getting into the reading habit;

- “Start easy” with a “fun, easy-to-read novel”;
- read on your commute if you can (short stories are suggested);
- have fun and read a thriller;
- try an audiobook while you run or prop a book on the treadmill in the gym – the time will fly by.

Think about joining a book club, where you can socialise and make new friends, discover new books, and most importantly, share the fun of reading!