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Huffington Post published an article entitled "7 Unconventional Reasons Why You Absolutely Should be Reading Books." They ran a poll of 1,000 U.S. adults and found that 28 percent hadn't read a book in the past year, which spurred them to look into current research studies on reading. Those of us who love to read will find this interesting. I have taken the liberty of condensing the article a bit! Here are the 7 reasons:

1. **It might help strengthen your 'mind-reading' abilities:** A study in Science, recommends reading 'literary works' to cultivate a skill known as 'theory of mind,' the ability to 'read' the thoughts and feelings of others."

2. **Reading can chill you out.** Mindlab International at the University of Sussex conducted research in 2009 to determine the best way to relieve stress. They showed that reading beat all the others. It took participants just six minutes to relax. What you read didn't matter as long as it engages your mind and you lose yourself in the book.

3. **It could help keep your brain sharp.** "Our study suggests that exercising your brain by taking part in activities such as these across a person's lifetime, from childhood through old age, is important for brain health in old age," reported study author Roberts. S. Wilson, Ph.D., of the Rush University Medical Center in Chicago, reported in the journal Neurology. "Based on this, we shouldn't underestimate the effects of everyday activities, such as reading and writing, on our children, ourselves and our parents or grandparents."

4. **And it might stave off Alzheimer's disease.** "The brain is an organ just like every other organ in the body. It ages in regard to how it is used," said lead author Dr. Robert P. told USA Today. "Just as physical activity strengthened the heart, muscles, and bones, intellectual activity strengthens the brain against disease."

5. **Reading may help you sleep better.** Bright lights, including those from electronic devices, signal the brain that it's time to wake up. Read your book under a dim light such as a bedside lamp. However, try not to choose a page-turner that will keep you up until you finish it!

6. **Getting lost in a book could make you more empathetic**. Researchers in the Netherlands designed two experiments which showed that people who were 'emotionally transported" by a fiction book experienced boosts in empathy. So go ahead, let yourself get caught up in a particularly compelling story, or swept away by a powerful character. It's good for you!

7. **Self-help books can ease depression**. "Depression saps people's motivation and makes it hard to believe change is possible," reported author Christopher Williams of the University of Glasgow. And, according to a University of Manchester meta-analysis published earlier this year, people with severe depression can benefit from 'low-intensity interventions," including self-help book.

So, read. It's good for you!

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