

# Erasmus +



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# Mental health and emotions



## Croatians

During our staying in Jalasjarvi, we Croatians noticed that we became much more courageous with trying new things without overthinking as usual, for example avanto (=ice swimming), spending time in the cold weather (even though our expectations were worse than reality in Finland), trying new candy and traditional Finnish dishes, for example karelian pie and eggbutter. We stepped out of our comfort zone in many perspectives.

This place is very peaceful and calming for us and especially after nature yoga, we were able to slow down, enjoy the moment, connect with nature and new friends, stop with our usual multitasking which shrank our stress level. We felt so much happiness and discovered that temperature and weather do not affect us, and what is important is the bonding and open-mindedness. We realized this when we were grilling sausages in the cottage.

We see small changes in ourselves, as Finnish peers encouraged us to just do the things we are not used to so we are now definitely more outgoing and that leads us to feeling more happy and energetic, rather than stressed and anxious.

Lastly, we must mention the house gathering at Jennis place where we felt the strongest connection with our Finnish peers when we were dancing and singing together. There we met even more people, however we have never felt this comfortable and accepted before. We hope that our Finnish friends will feel the same way when they visit Croatia.



## Finns

We were nervous to talk in English and afraid because of the language-barrier. We have become more brave during this last few days as a persons. Also we have become more confident to communicate in English.

During this project we have become more independent and creative. We have planned a lot of things for this project for example the opening ceremony and that has raised our sense of community. We also get along better as a team now.

We have experienced many different emotions for example nervousness, tiredness but especially happiness and joy. We are thankful for opportunities and all the great memories that we have made together with the Croatians. We have become more open-minded to try new things and get to know new people.

Coming out of  
your comfort  
zone leads to  
happiness

# Friendships and sense of community

Sense of community is the feeling of belonging, the feeling that we matter to one another.

## ONLINE AND OFFLINE FRIENDSHIPS

*We have met through the social media and we talked but we didn't know each other really good. When we met in person we learned so much more about each other, we got really close and have become good friends. We didn't only get close with our partners but with the whole group.*

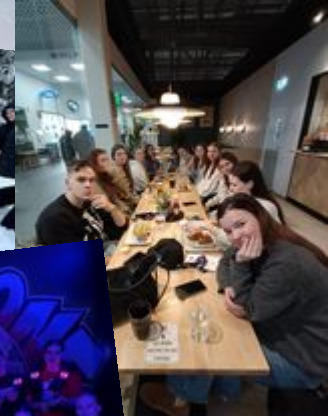
## ACTIVITIES WE DID

*Through the activities that were planned in this project we connected as a group. The first day the Finnish students prepared games and dances to warm up and to "break the ice". We learned some traditional Finnish dances that are telling a story about ice fishing or one called "Letkis". Later that day we decided to play the Megazone laser tag game. The next day we had a whole day outside. We played in the snow, we were sledding down a hill and we warmed up a little bit by grilling sausages. After that we went to sauna and then we went to the freezing water outside.*

## THE PARTY

*After a long day outside we decided to fill up our free time by throwing a party. Croatians got to try Finnish snacks, sweets and drinks. Croatians played their popular songs and Finns their and we danced and sang together even if we didn't know each other's languages. We also taught each other our dances for our songs. All of the students were really nice and everyone talked to everyone and most of the time in English so that we can all understand and feel included. Croatians also met people outside of this project and everyone was equal. We think this party was really important for our friendships and our relationships became stronger.*

**All you have to do is be yourself and open minded. You have to give everyone a chance and don't be scared of meeting new people.**





# people with different cultures

## Differences in homes

Croatians find it strange that people in Finland drink milk every meal and put fruits in salad. Finnish also don't wear slippers inside.

The friends houses are so far away from each other in Finland, while in Croatia houses are cramped.

Croatians usually go to party at publis spaces and "klet" (weekend house), while in Finland people have house parties and hang out at each others homes.

Finnish traditional houses are bigger than Croatians traditional houses. Nowadays finnish houses are built mostly of wood while croatian houses are built of concrete.



## Differences in daily life

Croatians found surprising that Finnish have saunas in their homes. They also liked a lot of snow activities even though it was freezing outside.

Finnish people are often in a hurry, while Croatians like to take things slow (laganini). Croatians people prefer to sit down and drink small cup of coffee for three hours with little gossiping.

## Similarities in culture

Both nationalities enjoy different kind of sports and football is one of favourites. Fans are intense and determined about home country and - clubs. Even though they drink it differently, both countries enjoy having coffee, especially at morning.

### tip of the day

**Don't judge, be open to new experiences and cultures and don't be afraid get out of your comfort zone. Be brave and open-minded everyday!**





# Mental and physical benefits.



## Our first time in a sauna:

We were surprised at the amount of sweat that was coming out of our bodies. It was hard to breathe at first but when you get used to it the sauna is relaxing.

## Our first time ice-swimming:

It wasn't as scary as we thought it would be and afterwards we felt super refreshed and ready to go again.

## Sauna

Sauna has a lot of physical health benefits. It improves blood circulation, especially peripheral circulation. The heat relaxes our muscles and enhances the recovery from physical activities. Going to sauna a lot also prevents dementia and can help people with asthma. Sauna also helps us sleep.

It comforts and relaxes us mentally. It also brings us together.

## Ice hole swimming

Foreigners probably think Finns are crazy because we swim in a hole made in the ice. In reality, ice hole swimming has a lot of good health effects.

- Ice swimming gives you endorphins and a big mood boost.
- It reduces stress.
- It eases sleep problems, and after ice swimming, you will sleep like a baby.
- It activates brown fat.
- stimulate blood flow and improve circulation.
- Some studies suggest that regular exposure to cold water may enhance the immune system's function.



## Nature yoga and tree hugging

On our second day we went to a forest to do some outdoor activities. One of those activities was nature yoga. We were a bit sceptical about how we were going to move with so many layers of clothes. All of us picked a tree we felt most connected to and the exercise started.

The yoga positions were all forest inspired and quite easy to do. We also did some breathing exercise and felt super relaxed afterwards. Since we chose a tree of our own, we showed it some love. Tree hugging is an unfamiliar concept to us but we can see how it can be beneficial. At the end all of us laid in the snow and made snow angels. That took us back to our childhood and it is nice to know that we left a trace of us in the forest.

Lastly, we have found some research of actual health benefits of nature yoga. Yoga in general improves sleep depth, balance and posture. It can also build muscles and help with breathing and circulation. In terms of mental well-being, yoga relaxes you and helps you deal with stress. It has been proven that yoga can be used as an effective alternative treatment for major depressive disorder. When combined with a natural setting, yoga connects us to nature. Hugging a tree makes you appreciate otherwise unimportant things in life. All your worries seem smaller when you're surrounded by the beauty and peace of a forest.



Be open to experience new things!

# School system

## - Finland vs Croatia -



### In Finland:

- Usually school starts at 8.00 and finished 15.30
- We usually have four different subjects per school day and lessons last about one hour and thirty minutes
- We have five periods per school year, every period lasts seven weeks and end of every period we have exam week. Also our schedule is different in every period.



#### Best things in Finnish school:

- **free school lunch and long breaks**

#### Hardest thing in Finnish high school:

- **exam weeks**

What would make the school easier?

- shorter school days and less school projects (for example essays) at the same time



#### Our dream school

- **8:30 - 13:30**
- **free lunch**
- **longer breaks (for Croatians 20 min)**
- **often school trips**
- **choosing your subjects**



### In Croatia:



- School starts at 7:45 and finishes at 13:50
- 45 minutes classes and 10 minutes breaks
- The lunch isn't provided --> we have to buy ourselves something to eat during the breaks
- Each year we take 14 -17 subjects (depending on a program) through out both semesters
- We are expected to have all positive grades in every subject in order to pass the year
- Exams approximately every week and oral exam twice a year in every subject (besides PE)

#### Best thing in our school:

- **often school trips and fun community life (recitals and fundraisers)**

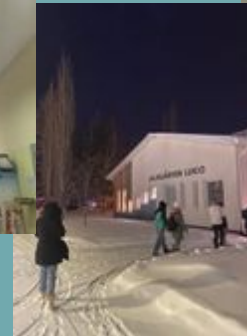


#### Hardest thing in our school:

- **exams every week**

What would help?

- dividing the subjects in groups and taking them at different times through out the year (like in Finland)



#### Tip of the day:

**Don't stress so much about the school because your grades don't determine you and your success in life!**  
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# MINDFULNESS

**As a part of mindfulness we all had to do different kind of tasks in the morning such as exercise, be without phones, say affirmations exc. These tasks were supposed to help our minds to be in the moment and raise awareness. Our tasks were exercising and no phones, here is a little how it went.**

## *stretching* IN THE MORNING

We had to do an exercise in the morning, such as yoga and stretching. In order to do it, we woke up five minutes earlier than planned, gathered in the hallway and started stretching. Both of us shoved some exercises and we followed each other.

Croatian:

I didn't feel that weird doing it since I'm used to working out, but not in the morning. During the stretches I felt really calm and present in the moment which is in my opinion a great start of the day. I noticed that my neck and lower back ached much less than usual. I didn't get directly any change my mental health, but I must say less pain in my body made me feel happier and less nervous. If you are, but also if you are not a morning person, I suggest you trying to exercise in the morning to kick-off the day with a good start. Maybe you won't feel change immediately, but everything is about motivation and discipline.

Finn:

It felt little weird to stretch for that long in the morning because I am just used to stretching my back a little when I get out of the bed. During stretching I felt tired, but after stretching I felt like I was more in the present moment and I also felt little more energetic.

## *No phone* FOR 30 MINUTES

Another mindfulness task was no phone for 30 minutes in the morning.

At first it was difficult because we are used to grab our phones as soon as we wake up. We are used to use social media and lay in the bed for a bit after we wake up. We had a pressure that we must answer our friends, but we have learned that we don't have to do that.

Insted of grabbing our phone we got up from bed earlier so we don't have to hurry later. We did our skincare routine, got dressed and had more time for make up. By doing this exercise we felt more energetic and less grumpy in the morning. During the day we had gone to many different places and traveled so it didn't give us any change.



# friendships and emotions



During this exchange, emotional connections and friendships for life were made. We were flooded with emotions ranging from excitement to tiredness.

## CREATING FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS BORDERS

For the students doing the exchange, making friendships with people from all around the world is the most important part. Overcoming our differences and fostering similarities only made our friendships stronger.

Through the activities that we did during the stay in Croatia, we discovered new sides of every participant. We did a talent show and saw many interesting performances. Although we were scared at first, it turned out to be really funny and a great way to connect on a deeper level.

## THE ROLE OF EMOTIONS

In a project like Erasmus+, there is inevitably many emotions at the same time. Waiting to see our friends again and hopefully not for the last time, excitement, tiredness :), discovering new cultures and parts of your own, learning more about others, the sadness of this whole project ending. We are feeling a lot of things all at once, but luckily we now know how to better manage our emotions and reactions. We are so grateful to have gotten a chance to participate. All of these emotions are worth it!





# *cultural differences and similarities*

## ***Differences***

**Finnish think that the biggest difference is that Croatians don't lock bathroom doors at home and they open in a different direction (inside).**

**Finnish usually don't eat turkey and it's a traditional meal in Croatia.**

**In Croatia people are allowed to smoke inside cafes and bars, while in Finland they are not.**

**Croatians don't get naked in public showers and Finnish do.**

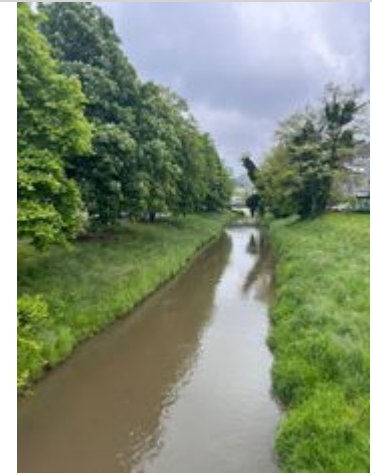
## ***Similarities***

**We all eat pizza. :)**

**We can all drink tap water which is not common in other countries.**

**We play music when we hang out and like similar english songs.**

**We are all connected to nature and value outside activities like fishing and hiking.**



# Mindfulness

## Silence & Gratitude

We practised silence when we came home. We meditated and relaxed our mind. It took a while to get mind totally silenced after the activities.

We practiced mindfulness with gratitude exercises which included remembering something we were grateful for the previous day. We told it to ourselves in front of a mirror to help us remember the positive sides of life.

While practicing mindfulness it's good to start with expressing gratitude and silence. It's an easy way to stay present and keep calm.



It affected us in a positive way and we think it is something easy that we can keep in our routines. It opened our eyes to the world of meditation and mindfulness. Staying in the present moment helps with mental and physical health.

We believe everyone needs to try it out for themselves because it is a very personal experience. Especially if you struggle with anxiety.





# *A guide to wellbeing*



**1.Live in the present moment!- Turn off your phone to connect with your surroundings.**

**2.Be your true self!- Don't present yourself in the BEST light but in YOUR light.**

**3.Get out of your comfort zone!- Living in your own bubble can only get you so far... ;)**

**4.Don't overthink everything!- Sometimes all you need to do is take that risk.**

**5.Stay genuine!- Honesty is the best policy.**

**6.Take care of yourself!- The most important is that you feel comfortable in your own skin. So eat, sleep, have fun repeat!**



# The Difference in Happiness and Wellbeing among Countries

## THE MAIN DIFFERENCE



How do we define happiness and wellbeing? Well, **happiness** is an emotional state characterized as a feeling of joy and satisfaction and **wellbeing** is a positive physical, mental and social state.

## FACTORS OF HAPPINESS

The main **factors** for a happy and healthy life differentiate from a country to country. But the ones remaining the same are: **good GDP** per capita, social support, healthy life expectancy, **freedom** to make life choices, **generosity**, **perceptions** of corruption, **dystopia** and **confidence interval**.

Here is an example of how factors work:

We have **Japan** with a strong healthcare system and long life expectancy. Japan supports happiness, especially among its elder population. On the other hand, we have **India**. India has limited healthcare access so life expectancy and overall life satisfaction are lower. That is why healthy life expectancy is one of the key happiness factors.

## FACTORS OF WELLBEING

The main **factors** for personal wellbeing are also a little different from a country to country, but we managed to find the ones that are the same everywhere. Here are those factors: physical **activity**, **mental health**, healthy **diet**, meaningful **relationships**, **financial** security, belonging to a **community** and **workplace wellness**.

Here is an example of how the factors work:

Finland provides many opportunities to improve your wellbeing, they have saunas and take long walks to work on that.

Then, we have Afghanistan - a war country. People in Afghanistan have no resources to work on themselves and no freedom. They are trapped in their country and extremely unhappy.

We have to work on our wellbeing in order to live a fulfilled life.

## SELF-IMPROVEMENT TIPS:

1. Be yourself!
2. Take care of **your health**, mental and physical!
3. Have your own life goals!
4. **Observe** and **learn** things!
5. Get out of your comfort zone!
6. Try something **new**!

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# Can money buy happiness?



Can money really make us happy or is it just a myth? Studies have shown that money can and will actually make you happy, so our goal is to prove it.

## PSYCHOLOGICAL BACKGROUND OF HAPPINESS

The psychological background of happiness goes all the way back to the human brain. What makes us happy? Dopamine, the happiness hormone, also known as "feel-good" neurotransmitter, plays a big part in it.

Money gives people satisfaction. People get dopamine from having the freedom to do what they want. On the other hand there are things you can't buy with money.



Studies show that gift-giving makes you happy.

## The Forbes study

Variety of studies have shown that earning and having money releases dopamine. According to Andrew Rosen (Forbes), money and happiness are closely connected. While some believe money can't buy happiness, it can actually lead to joy if approached with the right mindset. Studies have shown that money influences key happiness chemicals in our brains, making us feel good and satisfied. In conclusion, money alone doesn't guarantee happiness, but using it wisely and with a positive perspective can boost your well-being and lead to a more fulfilling life, says Andrew Rosen.

## The Verywellmind study

Research shows that while money can increase happiness by reducing stress from difficult situations and providing security, it's not the only source of well-being. Studies confirm a link between income and happiness, especially in societies with financial instability, but true happiness also depends on relationships and overall health. Constantly pursuing wealth can sometimes harm our connections with others, which are crucial for lasting happiness. In the end, while money helps, meaningful relationships and a balanced life are just as important for a truly happy life.

## Overall

Even though researches show that money can buy happiness, it is not that simple. Money can not buy healthy relationships nor health. In conclusion money can help you with your wellbeing but it should not be your only goal in life.

# The links between relationships and loneliness to health and wellbeing



An unpleasant emotional response to perceived isolation or lack of connection is what we call loneliness. It is known that a lot of people today, young or old, are constantly affected by "social pain". Even though we have social media, we feel alone and detached from everyone. Of course it is connected to both mental and physical health.

There are different types of loneliness, but they all affect our health the same. It is said to have correlation to health risks like heart diseases, cancer and memory problems, but also many more. For example, people that have unstable relationships with people and feel lonely usually have more depressive symptoms. They are more pessimistic and less satisfied, which also leads to attachment in relationships. Furthermore, excess loneliness can lead to memory problems and even Alzheimer's disease, and various personality disorders. Also, studies show that it can lead to increased inflammation in our body, meaning that we could catch colds easily and stay sick for longer than usual. There was an experiment made in 2017 that had shocking results - people that were lonelier became ill and caught a cold way faster than the control group, which clearly shows that loneliness and bad relationships with people do in fact cause more inflammation.

Loneliness is also associated with other chronic illnesses like diabetes and most importantly, increased mortality. It is known that it raised the mortality risk for 45% which is connected with depression and anxiety induced suicide, which is very common among both young and old adults. Every year, more than 700 000 people die from suicide, even though loneliness itself is not the main cause of suicide.

Moreover, loneliness is connected to an unhealthy lifestyle, bad sleep quality and higher levels of stress.

Relationships have a very strong connection to loneliness. The worse our relationships are, the lonelier we feel, which also means that there's more chance for psychological and physical illness. Relationships play a very important role in our daily life, no matter if it's friends, family, or any other social connection. It is important that we maintain them as much as possible.

## How do we fix loneliness and make a happy life?



First of all, it is important that we work on our relationships with people around us, like friends and family. Hanging out, connecting and doing meaningful things together instead of spending too much time online. Also, we have to acknowledge the psychological and physical symptoms that we may be experiencing so we know how to act, and we need to act as fast as possible, too. Communication in general is key, so we need to work on communicating our thoughts and problems with other people to toughen our relationships, which will lead to less loneliness.

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## ***The Role of Genetics and Environment in Shaping Happiness***

Happiness is a complex interplay of genetics, environment, and life choices. While genetic factors provide a foundation for our emotional tendencies, the environment—especially our relationships, social support, and life experiences—plays a crucial role in shaping long-term well-being. As research continues to uncover the genetic underpinnings of happiness, it's clear that environmental influences, such as supportive relationships and social structures, can have a profound impact on our happiness levels.

### ***The Interplay of Genetics***

Genetics play an important role in our happiness, but our environment matters too. For example, our genetic traits can affect how we see and react to the world, which can influence our happiness. Someone who is naturally optimistic may look for positive experiences, which helps them stay happy. Environmental changes, like the COVID-19 pandemic, can also affect our happiness, with some people being more resilient because of their genetic makeup.



## ***The Harvard Study of Adult Development***



The Harvard Study of Adult Development showed that having strong, supportive relationships is the most important factor for long-term happiness. People with good social connections tend to have better health, sharper minds, and less stress. This shows that both our genes and our social environment play a big role in our well-being.

### ***Lessons from Nordic Countries: Social Trust and Well-Being***

The success of Nordic countries like Finland in achieving high levels of happiness further emphasizes the importance of fostering a society where social trust, welfare systems, and work-life balance contribute to the well-being of all its citizens.



#### **SOURCES:**

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# WELLBEING IN CROATIA

## SOCIALIZING

One of the most important thing for people is socializing, so Croatians wanted to show Finnish people how they socialize.

Croatians love to go to coffee shops in the morning while Finnish people just drink it at home, alone in the dark. That is why Croatians wanted to show them how socializing in the morning eases their mind and gets rid of the negative thoughts.



There are some other ways of socializing, for example going to the bar in the evening. It also relaxes us and affects our state of mind.

## MENTAL HEALTH ACTIVITIES

As a part of the project, Croats and Finns had a bunch of tasks and lectures connected to their mental health. We talked about what makes each of us happy and what fulfils us. Walking in the circle and purposefully changing emotions and making a flower with petals as the things we appreciate in our lives were just a few of the exercises the students did. The conclusion was: What surrounds us and the things we focus on strongly affect our feelings and behaviour. If we focus on the positive things in our life we will be happier than stressing our mind over the negative things.





## **NATURE IN CROATIA**

Croatia is most famous for its protected nature, which offers a lot of places for its people to enjoy the fresh air and soak up the Sun. Croatians wanted to show the Finns how they connect with the nature and how it helps them for their mental and physical health. Students had an opportunity to enjoy the natural water in the local spa and explore the croatians National park Risnjak where they had a lot of activities and a short walk through the forest. After that they had a chance to swim in the Adriatic Sea in the city of Rijeka and the next day visit a castle Trakošćan where they learned a bit about the regional culture and nature. The change of scenery and going outside to take a break from our busy lives helps us refresh our mind and body.



## **LECTURES**

While exploring Croatia, the Finns also had a chance to learn something new. We had a presentation about mental health of Croatian teachers and we also visited Planetarium in Rijeka. Although it wasn't so interesting as the other activities, it was very educational which boosts our confidence.

## **TIPS FOR WELLBEING**

- change of scenery
- going on a walk and spending time in nature
- socializing with other people
- getting out of your comfort zone
- being physically active
- doing things that make you happy

# THE WELLBEING OF YOUR BRAIN



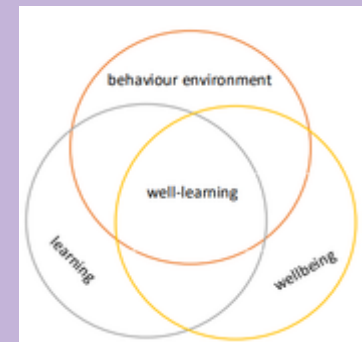
Brain is the most important part of human body and that is why we need to take good care of it. Everything we do affects our brain so it's important for us to have a healthy lifestyle. A healthy lifestyle means a healthy and hardworking brain.

In order to have a healthy brain we need to sleep enough and relax. Our brain is working when we sleep. We gather information during the day and when we go to sleep, our brain organizes the new things. The brain chooses the most important things and moves them from our active memory to our long term memory. Having enough sleep is essential for our learning and memories.

Relaxation is important for our body, but also for our brain. We need to do things at our own pace and not overwork the brain. Being in a safe environment allows our brain to relax and in order for it to function and work properly it needs to recover.

Good attention control skills are important for the wellbeing of our brain, because then our brain won't waste energy on things we shouldn't mind. By moving to a space with fewer distractions and impulses we help our brain concentrate. People are individuals and benefit from different surroundings, so figuring out what works for you and helps you be productive is important.

What also impacts the wellbeing of our brain is physical activity. Nowadays' children are spending too much time on the screens which has some positive but also negative effects. We should use technology to improve our learning and not just for having fun playing different games or watching films because then our physical activity gets neglected. When we are physically active the brain is increasing its activity and capacity for memory and learning. So if we want to be successful in learning, we need to move ourselves more!



## *Here are some tips to take care of your brain:*

- Sleep enough and well
- Avoid things that distract you
- Remember to relax
- Be physically active



\*Based on the lecture of Professor Minna Huotilainen



# THE HEALTH BENEFITS OF ICE SWIMMING AND BEING EXPOSED TO THE COLD



Ice hole swimming, or cold-water immersion, is a growing trend known for its positive effects on both the body and mind. While it may seem challenging, exposing yourself to cold water has been shown to improve physical health and boost mental well-being. The following article will explain how.

## **Physical Health Benefits**

Cold-water immersion can help reduce inflammation, which is the body's response to injury or stress. By reducing inflammation, your muscles and joints recover faster. This is why many athletes use cold-water baths after intense exercise. Additionally, cold exposure boosts blood circulation. When you enter cold water, your blood vessels tighten to keep your body warm. Once you get out, the vessels expand, allowing fresh, oxygen-rich blood to flow back to your muscles, supporting heart health. Regular cold exposure may also strengthen your immune system, helping you stay healthy and possibly reducing your chances of getting sick. Ice swimming also relaxes your body and helps to release endorphin, which allows you to have deeper and better quality sleep.



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## **Mental Health Benefits**

Ice swimming isn't just good for your body—it helps your mind too. Cold exposure triggers the release of endorphins, the body's "feel-good" chemicals, which can improve your mood and reduce stress and anxiety. It also improves mental resilience. The shock of the cold forces you to focus and push through discomfort, building mental toughness. Many people feel ice swimming offers peace of mind and a good feeling that lifts up your mood.



Tips for ice swimming sessions:

- Listen to your body
- Try the box breathing method
- Don't go ice swimming alone
- Give your body time to recover
- Don't jump in





# Sleep Deprivation

Sleep deprivation significantly impacts overall health, affecting the brain, immune system and the risk of chronic conditions. Sleep plays a critical role in maintaining brain health by regulating memory, emotional control, attention and information processing. A lack of sleep disrupts these functions and increases the risk of cognitive decline, dementia and mental health disorders.

The relationship between sleep and mental health is two way - poor sleep can worsen mental health and mental health issues can interfere with sleep. Sleep deprivation also increases the risk of chronic diseases such as obesity, diabetes, high cholesterol, and hypertension.



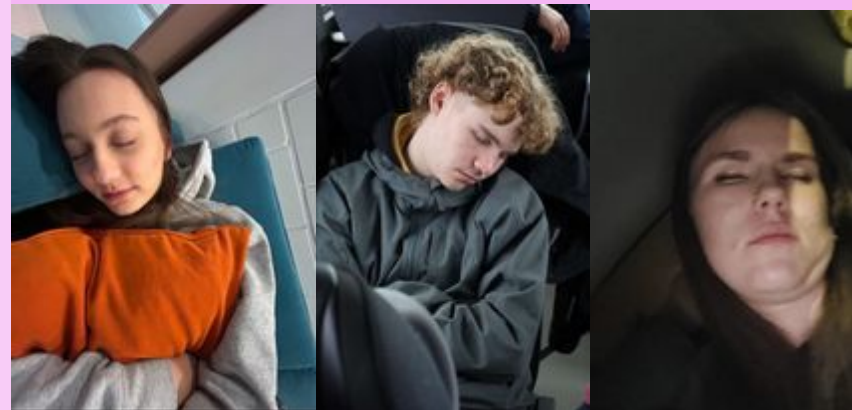
Additionally, sleep strengthens the immune system by boosting inflammation - regulating proteins, aiding in recovery and improving vaccine effectiveness. Chronic sleep deprivation can impair immune responses, making the body more vulnerable to infections and less effective at fighting illnesses. Persistent low grade inflammation and immune system deficiencies are further consequences of poor sleep.

Short sleep duration, particularly under seven hours, are linked to cardiovascular diseases and mortality. Poor sleep habits can also lead to cravings for unhealthy food and reduce physical activity, compounding the risk of health issues.



## Tips for better quality of sleep

- Physical activity: Engage in regular exercise to extend duration of deep sleep
- Prioritize sleeping: have a strict schedule and go to sleep at the same time everyday and put sleep before anything else
- Comfortable environment: Make sure that the bed is for your liking, the room is dark and the temperature is comfortable
- Do not nap your day away: Taking naps interfere with nighttime sleeping and will ruin your sleep schedule



Sleeping beauties <3

# Stress

## Stress effects on the memory

Stress has different effects your memory. When you are really stressed, you may feel like you can't remember or focus on anything. Even reading a book can be difficult, **Minna Huotilainen** writes. In severe cases, it can cause memory loss.

## Stress impacts on the body

Stress is a state of worry that can also affect your physical health. It can completely disrupt your immune and digestive system, in some severe cases cardiovascular problems have been recorded. The common mental disorders that come as consequences of the stress are **depression**, **anxiety** and **insomnia**.



Common stress symptoms:

- headaches/dizziness
- muscle tension/pain
- chest pain
- fast heartbeat
- stomach problems



## Stress and the brain

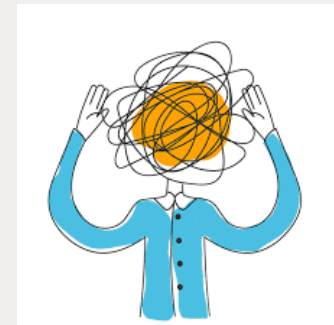
Stress has great impact on the brain, too. It disrupts sleep, memory and many other factors which have great affect on our daily functions. The brain is shunting its resources because one is always stuck in **survival** mode, not memory mode. Stress changes your brain chemistry, with stress hormones which include cortisol, norepinephrine, adrenaline and others. They help initiate the '**fight-or-flight**' response to stress which is crucial for survival, but chronic stress can lead to hormone disorders and other critical conditions connected to them.

## Stress and the heart

Stress can cause even cardiovascular diseases and disorders like palpitations, arrhythmia and others. Moreover, stress hormones rise the heart rate and **blood pressure**. It can also cause coronary artery diseases that are manifested in different ways. In the most severe cases it doubles the risk for myocardial infarction.

Tips for **reducing** stress:

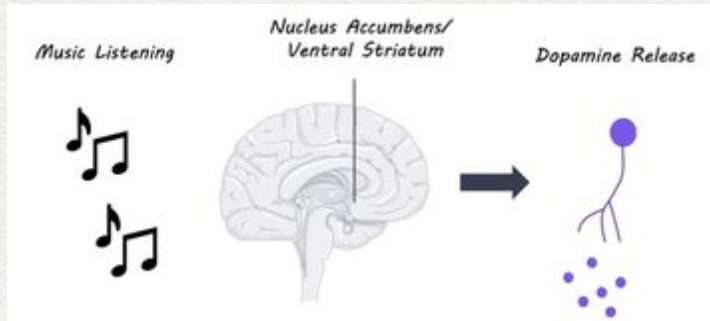
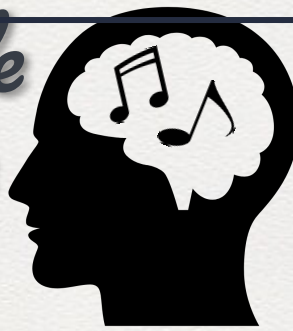
1. Aim for 7-8 hours of sleep each night
2. Minimize your use of caffeine and alcohol
3. Stay socially connected so you can get and give support
4. Make time for rest and relaxation
5. Stay physically active
6. Plan your day



### Sources:

<https://sydan.fi/fakta/stressin-vaiikutukset-sydanterveyteen/>  
<https://www.healthline.com/health/stress#management>  
<https://kidshealth.org/en/teens/stress-tips.html>  
<https://www.verywellmind.com/stress-and-your-memory-4158323>

# The remarkable effects of music on your brain



## Introduction

Music is a universal language that can elicit profound emotional and cognitive responses. It also engages a diverse network of brain regions and circuits, including sensory-motor processing, cognitive, memory, and emotional components. Listening to one's preferred music can grant easier access to these brain functions. Music therapy can also be used to retrain impaired brain circuits in different disorders. Understanding how music affects the brain can open up new avenues for music-based interventions in healthcare, education, and wellbeing.



## 1. Boosting Brainpower

Playing a musical instrument or singing in a choir does more than bring joy, it's like a workout for your brain. Musical activities engage multiple regions of the brain at once.

- Improved Memory: they constantly recall melodies, rhythms, and notes. Even for non-musicians, listening to music activates memory centers, which is why familiar songs can bring back vivid memories.
- Cognitive Skills: musical training strengthens executive functions like problem-solving, attention, and multitasking.

## 2. Emotional Wellness Through Music

One of music's most immediate and profound effects is its ability to elevate mood and regulate emotions.

- The Dopamine Effect: listening to music or singing in a choir releases dopamine, the "feel-good" molecule associated with pleasure and reward.
- Stress Relief: studies have shown that relaxing music, such as slow tempos or classical pieces, lowers levels of cortisol, the stress hormone.

Singing or playing music with others also strengthens social bonds.

## 3. Music for Mental Health and Healing

Engaging in musical hobbies or even passive listening has been shown to alleviate symptoms of anxiety and depression. In fact, music therapy is now a recognized treatment for various mental health conditions.

- playing an instrument often creates a state of "flow," a deep focus where time seems to disappear. It reduces overthinking.
- Mood Regulation: When you feel overwhelmed or down, music can act as an emotional reset.

## Conclusion

Whether you're actively playing an instrument or passively enjoying your favorite playlist, music has the ability to transform your brain and uplift your spirit. From improving cognitive skills to regulating emotions and preserving brain health, the effects of music are as diverse as they are profound.

So, next time you pick up your guitar, sing in the shower, or press play on your favorite song, know that you're not just enjoying yourself—you're doing your brain a world of good.

Music isn't just an art—it's brain fuel.

## Sources:

- <https://magazine.hms.harvard.edu/articles/how-music-resonates-brain>
- <https://www.hopkinsmedicine.org/health/wellness-and-prevention/keep-your-brain-young-with-music>
- <https://pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC10765015/#sec1>



# Participants in Erasmus+ You Don't Find a Happy Life, You Make it!

## **Students:**

Jana Matuša, Ema Papeš,  
Ivona Bobičanec, Margareta Frgec,  
Sara Balen, Dorotea Lisak, Tara Turković,  
Vita Zadavec, Hana Svrtan, Antonija Duh,  
Aliisa Heikkinen, Anniina Anttila, Ella-Julia Valkkio,  
Jenni Kuusisto, Joonas Kurikkaoja, Vilma Luhtanen,  
Ilona Hovila, Irene Hongisto, Maria Ranta-Kuivila,  
Neea Virnala

Dorotea Brozd, Toni Crnić, Lorena Cvilinder,  
Lorena Majcen, Jana Jambrečina, Jakov Korade, Ana  
Julia Bertić,  
Roko Jaković, Marija Kučko, Petar Žukina,  
Niklas Kannonlahti, Roope Koistinen, Vilma  
Koivuniemi,  
Lauri Kokko, Janna Leppälä, Jesse Mattila, Alisa  
Ruohoniemi,  
Lotta Seppälä, Emma Tenkula, Tilda Vainio

## **Teachers:**

Sanja Ždralović, Bibijana Šlogar, Ljubica Andelković  
Džambić,  
Gorana Todorović, Nada Mihovilić, Ivan Miškulin,  
Hanna Heikkilä, Jaana Tahvanainen, Soile Lehtonen,  
Lauri Mäntykoski