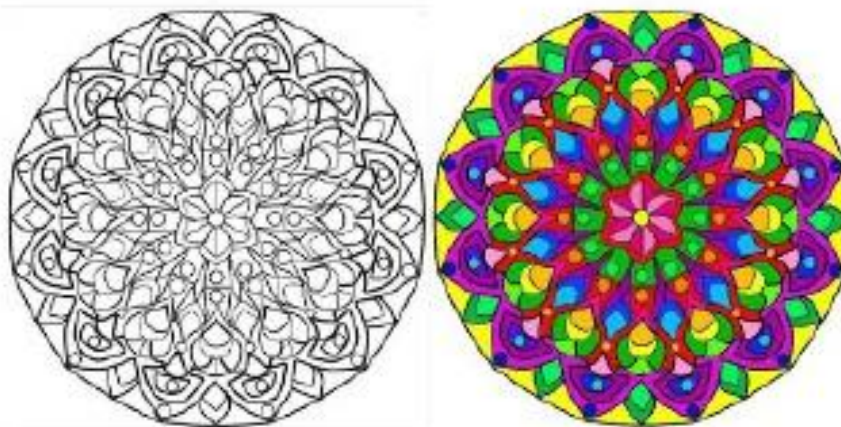




"We positively impact people's lives through the power and appreciation of art."

May 2015
Issue #104

In This Issue:
Coloring Isn't Just For Kids



Coloring Isn't Just For Kids. It Can Actually Help Adults Combat Stress.

The following excerpt is from an article written by: Elena Santos & was originally published by Huffington Post, October 2014

Coloring is an activity that we tend to associate with children. As we grow older, we put aside our crayons and colored pencils in favor of more respectable writing utensils like pens and highlighters. However, it turns out coloring can be beneficial for adults-- namely for its de-stressing power.

The practice generates wellness, quietness and also stimulates brain areas related to motor skills, the senses and creativity. In fact, publishers have lately been launching coloring books specifically for

adults. The trend is alive and well in countries in Europe and North America. Most recently, in Spain, the publication Espasa published *Coloreitor*, with illustrations by well known cartoonist Forges.

Does Coloring Really De-stress?

One of the first psychologists to apply coloring as a relaxation technique was Carl G. Jung in early 20th century. He did this through mandalas: circular designs with concentric shapes similar to the Gothic churches' rose windows. They have their origin in India.

When coloring, we activate different areas of our two cerebral hemispheres, says psychologist Gloria Martinez Ayala. "The action involves both logic, by which we color forms, and creativity, when mixing and matching colors. This incorporates the areas of the cerebral cortex involved in vision and fine motor skills [coordination necessary to make small, precise movements]. The relaxation that it provides lowers the activity of the amygdala, a basic part of our brain involved in controlling emotion that is affected by stress.

In simplest terms, coloring has a de-stressing effect because when we focus on a particular activity, we focus on it and not on our worries. But it also "brings out our imagination and takes us back to our childhood, a period in which we most certainly had a lot less stress."

"I recommend it as a relaxation technique," says psychologist Antoni Martinez. "We can use it to enter into a more creative, freer state," he assures. We can also use it to connect with how we feel, since depending on our mood we choose different colors or intensity. "I myself have practiced that. I recommend it in a quiet environment, even with chill music. Let the color and the lines flow."