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**Indoor Plants Are Wildly Beneficial To One's Body and Mind**

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## **Indoor Plants Are Wildly Beneficial To One's Body and Mind**

Having plants indoors used to be looked at as strange and unnatural, but today houseplants have since been normalized and popular to own. Many enjoy plants in their homes to brighten a space and to achieve an aesthetic they are going for but indoor plants are so much more than decor or a trend on tik tok (Menzi). Many studies have now been conducted looking at every way in which plants can improve our lives. Scientists have explored what bringing nature inside can do and found that indoor plants are beneficial for improving physical health and mental health.

Plants can help to improve air quality and reduce air pollution (Joy). They do this in the same way that outdoor plants would. Many people spend too much time inside breathing indoor air where air pollution is commonly several times greater than the air outside. Breathing this air can lead to sick building syndrome-symptoms include throat irritation, Headache, dizziness and loss of concentration. Scientists have found over 300 toxins called volatile organic compounds in our air but, plants can remove these toxins. For example, a study showed that plants removed benzene from the air in high doses within 24 hours (Akers). Photosynthesis is the process that gives plants the power to remove toxins from the air and clean it. Plants first pull in toxins into their roots and leaves. Second, through photosynthesis they work to detoxify the air. Lastly plants release the clean air they have produced (Planterra Editor). A NASA study introduced the idea of phytoremediation when plants scrub contaminants from the air. The study took place when NASA was looking to improve the poor air quality in space crafts (Joy). Through this study NASA found that “plant-filled rooms contain 50 to 60 percent fewer airborne molds and

bacterias than rooms without plants” (Planterra Editor). These plants also hold many other benefits than just purifying air (“How can plants help mental health?”).

Plants can also help a person recover from illness, injury, and even surgery (Haupt). Plants can help a person to have a decreased risk of illness. Part of this is because as plants clean the air they remove as much as 20% of dust in rooms. When the dust is removed this can help reduce risks of irritated airways as well as runny noses and itchy eyes (Akers). People staying in a hospital looking at greenery in their rooms enjoyed many benefits such as requiring less pain medication as well as experiencing a shorter stay (Joy). Those exposed to plants in their rooms had a more positive experience. Patients seemed to be calmer resulting in better clinical outcomes. A Past president of the American Horticultural therapy Association said “They found that simply looking at plants had some benefits” (Haupt). Another study done in a hospital investigated the exposure of real vs artificial nature on patients in hospital rooms. The hospital divided the rooms in the hospital evenly so that some contained real plants or posters of plants and others had no plants at all. They studied 457 patients with 40% male and 60% female. They ran many tests on the patients such as magnetic resonance imagery. Through these tests scientists found that the Patients exposed to real plants had lower levels of stress compared to the control group. This proves that plants can be a positive influence on your well being (Beukeboom).

Indoor plants can also help reduce the effects of mental disorders such as depression, anxiety and stress. With the help of indoor plants a person will be more able to battle depression. Plants also help to improve one's mood. Plants are essential to maintain a sense of well being. They contain a range of psychological benefits. Those who have indoor plants in their space generally feel happier and more optimistic. Surveys show that 79 percent of patients were calmer and more relaxed, 19 percent of patients had more positive outlooks on life, and 25 percent of

patients felt refreshed. Indoor plants can also help to boost a person's self esteem in turn helping to reduce a common cause of depression. Low self esteem is most seen in adolescents and young adults. It causes people to feel bad about themselves, leading to feelings of depression. . Taking care of plants can also help by giving you a sense of self worth and accomplishment. Caring for something such as a plant can make you feel like there is more to the world than just yourself. Taking care of plants has a positive effect on self esteem and depression. (Akers).

Looking at plants can be described as a peaceful activity that might even bring release from worry (Akers). One study found that plants actually help to suppress “the system in our bodies that gets activated when we sense distress signals” (Das). Indoor plants connect with us to calm us down (Das). Through many studies people have been tested to see if plants help with feelings of stress and anxiety, One particular study does an excellent job of proving this point. The study is the “psychological and physiological benefits of interaction with indoor plants” (Lee). The subjects consisted of 24 young male adults in their mid 20’s. They were split into two groups of 12 members. One group started with a short and simple computer tasks. The other group started with the tasks of transplanting an indoor plant. Their heart rate validity, low frequency, high frequency, and blood pressure were all recorded. The feelings the group had after the computerized task and the task with transplanting the indoor plants were vastly different. During the transplanting task the people felt more “comfortable, soothed, and natural” after along with lower blood pressure (Lee). The researchers concluded that indoor plants “reduce psychological and physiological stress” compared with mental work (Lee). Furthermore, while the people were working with the indoor plants they felt much better but, when working with the computerized tasks they felt “uncomfortable, awakened, and artificial” as well as having increased levels of the blood pressure bringing harmful effects on mental health (Lee). The irony

of the results is most people are actually more used to computerized tasks than dealing with plants. This means many would think that you might feel more familiar with and more comfortable and confident with the computerized tasks. When in reality even though plants might be new territory for some they prove to be more beneficial (Lee). If looking for specific plants to help reduce stress and anxiety succulents are a great option as they help with concentration and productivity while not requiring too much of your attention. (“Indoor Plants Help Relieve...”).

Being around and working with indoor plants can be therapeutic for many people which is known as Horticultural therapy. Horticultural therapy is helpful for those with mental illness by increasing feelings of well being in people who have depression, anxiety or other conditions. Because of this, plants are beginning to be prescribed to people with mental illness although this might not be the best option for everyone (Joy).

Unfortunately for some, plants could be causing their allergies. If a person is allergic to pollen or mold, then plants might be doing them more harm than good. The first type of allergies found in plants is pollen. Many flowery plants might contain pollen and could be the reason for hives on bare skin. Pollen is also to trigger a variety of allergic reactions such as rhinitis and urticaria. A part of the problem is that pollen is small enough that the natural air flow in a home or space will keep the pollen afloat in the air at all times making it easier for the pollen to reach and have a negative effect on your allergies. Mold is another common allergen found in plants. It can be found in the soil potted plants derive their nutrients for living from,. Similarly to pollen, mold releases spores into the air. These mold spores can cause runny, itchy or blocked noses, eye irritation, and itchy red skin. Both pollen and mold allergies share symptoms that range from congested noses or coughing to hay fever or loss of smell. Indoor plants contain lots of allergens

that people might be allergic to. Many people would not want plants in their home and spaces if they are going to cause harm and discomfort (“Can Houseplants Cause Allergies”).

Even though some may be allergic to plants there are many ways to minimize the intensity of these allergic reactions. To prevent a reaction they should choose non-flowering plants or plants that produce very little pollen. To help with the mold, proper care must take place. Don't over water because doing so could encourage mold growth. Also, make sure the plants are getting plenty of sun. The use of “dry heat and light prevent mold from taking root in your plants” (“Can Houseplants Cause Allergies”). As a plant where they could get a dehumidifier can help maintain humidity levels below 50% in indoor spaces which helps to minimize mold. The air purifier will filter out pollen and mold allergens from the air, helping to make it harder for it to get to the person and cause them harm. An important part is choosing the right plants for a space. Choosing plants they're not allergic to and that won't produce pollen or too much mold can be super helpful. Maybe the plant chosen will even clean and purify the air. Some of the best plants to have are peace lilies, marginata, and lady palms. Some of the worst plants include the weeping fig, marigold, and orchids. An allergic reaction to a plant or the mold and pollen found in them can be prevented. Taking an allergy medicine that is safe for adults and kids can effectively relieve allergy symptoms that can be triggered. Plants are incredibly beneficial and should not be ruled out as a way to bring recovery and joy if allergic, there are simply ways around them (“Can Houseplants Cause Allergies”).

It's clear that indoor plants are wildly beneficial to one's well being. They are helping combat mental health and boosting physical health in all aspects immensely. Indoor plants are so beneficial to our productivity and attention making them amazing aids in a school environment. If we put plants in all classrooms the overall effect would make students happier. If more people

paid attention to the scientific studies about plants they would clearly see that plants are an easy and natural way to improve one's life and health. Everyone should have a plant.

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