



WEAVE

for mind and body

By Madelyn van der Hoogt

How about an activity that uses both the left and right sides of your brain; gives you stretching, weightbearing, and aerobic exercise; provides hours of blood-pressure lowering meditation, brings new friends into your life, and produces something tangible and beautiful at the same time?

Maybe back in the 1960s you knew someone who wove as part of that era's appreciation for making things from scratch. You might be surprised to learn that many are still at it—and others are discovering its benefits.

Jane Patrick, of Boulder Colorado, has time for weaving now that her daughter is out on her own. She says,



Gail Campbell, of Beeliar, Western Australia, loves Sudoku, but she wove her game and works with colors instead of numbers.

In addition to the physical act of weaving, there is often something to do to a loom that promotes flexibility and dexterity.

Jane Patrick of Boulder, Colorado



PHOTOGRAPH BY GAIL MATHEWS

Pat Springer of Sun City West, Arizona



PHOTOGRAPH BY PAT SPRINGER

“There are two parts to the weaving process that utterly engage me. The first is designing and problem solving. I love how it makes my mind work. The second is the actual physical act of weaving. For me, throwing the shuttle has a meditative quality that gives me a sense of peace and wellbeing. I think that at this point in my life, I have a need to be intentional, to feel connected to the process and to the world I live in—and even beyond.”

A well-equipped weaving studio is part of the community recreation system available to residents of the retirement community of Sun City West, Arizona. Weavers there have formed a guild that’s in its twenty-seventh year. Meeting to weave together creates a bond of lifelong friendships. The guild holds workshops, inviting instructors from all over the United States and Canada. Pat Springer observes,



PHOTOGRAPH BY DEE COCA



Nancy Hoskins, of Eugene Oregon, teaches in Sun City West

“It’s a wonderful life experience to learn a new skill and then derive great enjoyment from it for many years. It is an even greater joy to become proficient in a weaving technique and pass it on to new retirees, who will become the teachers of the next generation of Sun City West residents.”

Colleen Madigan gave up her career as a nurse to stay home and raise her children. Deciding to become a stay-at-home mom created a need that she had to fill with something besides children. “When I read an article about weaving—something called to me. I learned more, bought a loom, and started in. As they grew up, my children played near my loom with their toys or with my yarn and shuttles. One of them once cut the very fine silk warp threads at the back of the loom so his GI Joes could swing like soldiers rappelling into combat. That was a memorable event!”

“I’ve turned to weaving during times of sorrow or stress in my life,” Colleen continues. “With each pass of the shuttle through the warp threads, a beautiful fabric would grow

and my heart and soul were soothed. When my mother learned that she was dying of cancer, she asked me to weave a liturgical stole for her minister in her memory. I cried as I wove, but I always left the loom having found the peace and strength to face another day. I finished my mother’s stole on Easter Sunday morning and the minister wore it for services that day and at my sister’s wedding, which my mother lived to attend.

Colleen also notes that membership in her local weaving guild led to participation in regional and national conferences of weavers, where she’s made friends from all over the world in addition to learning new techniques.

Find out more about weaving and its companion craft spinning at www.spinweave.org, www.weavespindye.org, and www.handwovenmagazin.com.

Colleen Madigan, of Manassas, Virginia

