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Why I . . . crochet

GP registrar Lucy-Jane Davis talks to **Adrian O'Dowd** about why crochet and yarn spinning are great therapeutic hobbies that help her to destress and improve her concentration

Adrian O'Dowd

"It's a small pleasure but it's something that's full of joy—which is a positive thing at the moment," says Lucy-Jane Davis.

Davis took up crochet and yarn spinning about 10 years ago after being prompted by her mother. "It was when my eldest son was a baby that my mother said to me 'I'm surprised you've never done crochet,' and she showed me how to do it. It set me off," she explains. "I started by making a baby blanket and then I learnt how to make shawls. My mum loved them and I used to make her a shawl once a year for Christmas or her birthday."

One of the attractions of the hobby is the ability to fit it in at different times during the day or night. "You can pick it up and put it down again easily," Davis says. "Most of the time, if I'm out and about, I'll have little bags with a bit of yarn and a project that I'm working on."

"I can sit and watch television in the evening and crochet something at the same time. I even do it during Zoom meetings. The physicality of doing something with my hands helps me to concentrate, and it's good to create something."

Davis says she was always drawn to yarn and its colours and textures. "Suddenly you have a hobby where you can make these skeins of amazing colours into a scarf or a shawl." She started spinning following an impulsive purchase of a whole fleece at a county show a few years ago. "I'd never known quite what to do with it," she says.

"I realised that I wanted to learn how you get this fluffy ball into a spun yarn, so I found a local guild of spinners and weavers," Davis says. "They get together—or they did before the covid lockdowns—and do a spinning class, so I went along to learn. It was more technical and complicated than I expected but it's a lovely thing to learn and to spend time with people who are a community and want to engage with you and help. It's completely different from my medical life."

Davis finds both hobbies help her to destress. "Mindfulness is encapsulated in sitting still and doing something like crochet or spinning—focusing on one single thing—but at the same time you can be processing all sorts of thoughts."

She would recommend her hobbies to other doctors, saying, "Having something that you enjoy and that gives you pleasure—and doesn't hurt anybody—is probably good for you."

How to make the change:

- Find somebody who knows how to crochet and get them to show you
- Invest in a decent crochet hook that you want to work with
- Get a handle on the tension that you use when wrapping the yarn around your hand
- Contact or visit, if you can, independent yarn shops who can give advice on classes
- Visit the Association of Guilds of Weavers, Spinners, and Dyers (www.wsd.org.uk) the national body with local branches across the country