

Folks in Sisters Country discover joy of coloring

By Diane Goble
Correspondent

This summer's hottest trend, in arts and crafts at least, is coloring books. These are not your children's coloring books. These are highly detailed, intricate, delicate, often whimsical designs that need to be studied and planned out before colors are applied. There could be faces or creatures hidden within the design, color schemes that disappear and reappear in other places.

This is the joy of coloring. The creativity comes from the color selection and the theme throughout the piece. It's not paint-by-numbers; the artist decides the color scheme and chooses the medium. You can use crayons, markers, gel pens, colored pencils or paint with a fine brush. You can add dimension by using multiple mediums.

You can find designs online and print them out so you can give this grown-up coloring a try. If you decide you like it, there are pads of designs available on fine art papers. The designs may be paisleys, fractals, botanicals, animals, enchanted forests, fantasy creatures, or mandalas. Many of these will be suitable for framing.

Mandalas are usually colorful circular designs with a center focal point used by some Eastern religions to calm the mind, align the body's energy centers, restore harmony between mind, body and spirit, and encourage feelings of peace and love.

The act of drawing the mandala, adding the colors,

and sitting quietly staring at the center of your mandala is a mediation practice. If you feel anxious or upset, staring at the picture while taking a few slow, deep breaths can calm you down. Hang it near your workstation where you can glance at it during your crazy-busy day to return you to a peaceful state of relaxation.

In Sisters, The Paper Place has a few basic books, as does Paulina Springs Books. Alpenhimmel has a big selection. They also carry a good variety of pens, brushes and paints, and offer classes to get you started. The Pony Express has a wide selection of pens and markers. The two businesses try not to overlap, so check out both stores.

Many other hobbies can be relaxing, but coloring involves complete absorption.

"It's both tactical and creative, engaging both sides of the brain," says Alice Domar, PhD, executive director of the Domar Center for Mind/Body Health in Boston. Some hobbies allow your mind to wander or you can watch TV while doing them, but coloring, Domar says, "really requires you to be in the moment."

She recommends it to people dealing with a lot of stress and says those who are disabled or in chronic pain can find benefit from this activity. It can also be a group activity where people get together to talk, color, and share their lives with one another.

Too much stress is likely the reason this grown-up coloring book idea has been trending. It's an

easy, pleasant, rewarding stress-management technique for busy people who use technology all day long. A study published in the *Journal of Internal Medicine* (Jan. 2015) found that people who sit for long periods have an increased risk for diabetes, heart disease, cancer and shorter life spans, even if they also exercise.

They recommend taking more frequent breaks — stand up, walk around, do a few laps around the office or your living room; do something else for five minutes every hour.

Leave your coloring book open and gel pens out so when you walk by you notice them and stop for a few minutes to apply one color wherever it needs to be. Do it standing, not sitting. You'll return to your tasks relaxed with a fresh perspective and renewed energy.



PHOTO BY DIANE GOBLE

Adult coloring books are catching on.

Champion...

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Ryan Hudson of Sisters continued to shine in competition in the 2015 World Masters Cup in Dallas. Hudson won gold in the 35-39 age group. He competed in the 2015 U.S. Senior National Championships and placed top 20 overall in the country.

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