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SETTINGS

ase use Acrobat Reader to print and ake sure that the settings 'Actual size' and 'Auto portrait/landscape' are selected.

SAVE PAPER & TONER

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INTRODUCTION Coloring-in Pictures - Under the Sea

Almost three quarters of the planet is covered by water, which is why the earth is also called the "blue planet". Without the water in our oceans, there would be no life on earth. The seas and oceans are our most species-rich habitats. It's estimated that between 500,000 and two million different species live in the coral reefs alone. Marine animals and plants are different from those on land and so are their colors. Some animals use bright colors to warn that they're poisonous. The colors of some other species can be misleading to us, because fish perceive colors differently than humans. As such, marine creatures that we perceive as very colorful may actually be very well camouflaged.

Children color in pictures at school primarily to practice motor skills. They're instructed to "... always color in neatly between the lines!" Coloring-in books are very popular with children because they can get to grips with a picture quickly and the activity has a calming effect. One possible explanation for this relaxation effect could be the monotonous coloring motion. Scientists have in fact measured slower brainwave frequencies during coloring in, which may explain why it's so calming.

Adults might also get into coloring in, but they don't usually have the opportunity to do so, and neither do most of them have pencils or watercolors to hand. In fact, coloring in is also catching on with adults who are looking for the perfect 'digital detox'. So, get out of the virtual world, put down your smartphones and tablets, pick up the pencils and paints, do something beautiful with your hands, and return to childhood pursuits!

But what's really going on in our heads? When coloring in, we concentrate primarily on the coloring between the lines. This level of attention is enough to push disturbing thoughts to the periphery of consciousness. In other words, coloring in actually slows down the constant clamor of thoughts. Disturbing thoughts often concern things happened in the past and those that might happen the future. But when you're coloring in such thoughts evaporate - you're simply painting - in the here and now.

Coloring in won't solve your real-world problems, of course, but it can give you space to breathe. After half an hour of coloring in, you'll find you're able to approach your problems with a fresh mind.

So you see, coloring in isn't just child's play. In our stressful modern world, it's now perfectly acceptable for adults to color in with coloring pencils. Advanced artists can even be daring and use watercolor paints! LABBEAS

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