

# The Power of Play: The Positive Effects of Video Games on Well-Being

Video games are one of the world's most popular and beloved forms of entertainment, enjoyed by 205.1 million Americans today. Video games are more than just fun – players and academics agree that playing video games can provide social, emotional, and mental benefits that go well beyond entertainment.

1

## Video games have mental health benefits.

In a global study<sup>i</sup>, players around the world agreed that video games provide:

### Mental Stimulation



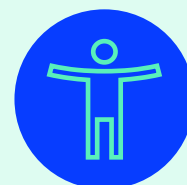
81%

### Stress Relief



80%

### Accessible Experiences for People with Different Abilities



78%

Beyond stress relief, video games improve players' mental well-being. A growing body of academic and scientific research shows video games can help improve feelings of depression and loneliness, in addition to other well-being challenges.



A 2025 study found that the number of hours spent playing video games **does not negatively impact players' mental health** but rather, **players reported higher overall mental well-being.**<sup>ii</sup>



A team of researchers studied the impact of playing a video game and found that it “corroborates what qualitative research and reports from video game players ... have long suggested: **people feel good playing games,**” demonstrating that **video game play is linked to improvements in mood.**<sup>iii</sup>



Researchers have found that casual **video games have been shown to significantly improve anxiety** and, in this case, outperform medication.<sup>iv</sup>

## 2

### Video games foster social connection.

Video games enable inherently social experiences, allowing players to stay connected with loved ones and even discover new relationships, improving their overall well-being and combatting feelings of loneliness.



A 2021 study found there is a **“significant positive relationship” on social well-being for players who stay connected digitally** through Massively Multiplayer Online (MMO) games.<sup>v</sup>



A pilot trial showed **video games can help older adults** who are suffering from loneliness.<sup>vi</sup>

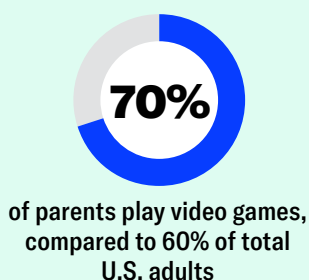


Researchers found that when **people do strike up online friendships, they “are often of excessive quality.”**<sup>vii</sup>

## 3

### Playing video games can be good for families’ well-being, too!

Among parents whose kids play video games **84%** are aware of ESRB ratings and **78%** regularly use them.<sup>xiii</sup>



#### Of Parents Who Play...



According to one study, video game play at the family level can foster better family satisfaction and dynamics by helping to improve communication and increasing family closeness.

**“The results showed that the more frequently family members play video games together, the better family satisfaction and family closeness they have. Families with poor family communication benefit more from co-playing than those with effective family communication. [...] Participants typically enjoyed playing video games with family members, and social benefits are the most salient in family settings.”**<sup>ix</sup>

## Sources

<sup>i</sup>[2025 Global Power of Play Report, Entertainment Software Association.](#)

<sup>ii</sup>[Perceived value of video games, but not hours played, predicts mental well-being in casual adult Nintendo players.](#)

<sup>iii</sup>[Affective uplift during video game play: A naturalistic case study.](#)

<sup>iv</sup>[Zombies vs. anxiety: An augmentation study of prescribed video game play compared to medication in reducing anxiety symptoms.](#)

<sup>v</sup>[Massively multiplayer online games and well-being: A systematic literature review.](#)

<sup>vi</sup>[Play mode effect of exergames on subthreshold depression in older adults: A randomized pilot trial.](#)

<sup>vii</sup>[The psychology behind video games during COVID-19 pandemic: A case study of Animal Crossing: New Horizons.](#)

<sup>viii</sup>[2025 Essential Facts About the U.S. Video Game Industry.](#)

<sup>ix</sup>[Families that play together stay together: Investigating family bonding through video games.](#)