

Do Bookworms Live Longer? New Study Links Reading More Books To Longer Lifespan

8 August 2016, 2:29 am EDT By [Alyssa Navarro](#) Tech Times



Can reading books contribute to a longer lifespan? A new study by Yale University has discovered a link between book reading and increased longevity. More books may equate to a two-year increase in lifespan, researchers say. (Sebastien Wiertz | Flickr)

The more books you bury your nose into, the longer you live, a new study suggests.

A team of experts from Yale University School of Public Health found a link between reading more books and increased [longevity](#), indicating that bookworms may have a "significant survival advantage" compared with people who don't read books.

Researchers examined data that involved 3,635 people who participated in a large health study and answered several questions about reading.

The data was divided into three groups: people who read books up to three and half hours weekly, people who read more than three and a half hours, and people who read no books at all.

The majority of book readers tended to be college-educated, female and had higher incomes than others. Because of this, researchers controlled for these factors as well as race, age, depression, enjoyment, self-reported health and marital status.

Results Of The Study

In the end, experts found that book readers who spend time up to 3.5 hours a week engrossed in a book were 17 percent less likely to die over the 12-year follow-up period, while those who read more than the three hour-mark were 23 percent less likely to die.

And although the report did not distinguish the difference between reading physical book copies and using digital copies on [Kindle](#), it did find that those who read books in general lived an average of two years longer than those who don't.

Furthermore, experts found a similar association to longevity among people who read periodicals and newspapers, but the rate was weaker.

Epidemiology Professor Becca Levy, senior author of the Yale study, says the participants who reported as little as half-hour a day of reading books showed a "significant survival advantage" than others.

"[T]he survival advantage remained after adjusting for wealth, education, cognitive ability and many other variables," [says](#) Levy.

Meanwhile, the report did not establish a cause-and-effect relationship, but provided an association. The findings of the study are [published](#) in the journal *Social Science & Medicine*.

Importance Of Reading

Multiple studies have shown that the ability to read can affect several aspects of a person's life, from family circumstances to economic well-being and mental health.

In 2008, a study conducted by Prison Reform Trust discovered that 48 percent of prisoners in the United Kingdom had a below Level 1 reading level, suggesting a link between illiteracy and criminality.

Another research found that kids with access to books were able to anticipate higher incomes when they grow up than kids who had few or no access to books at all.

Guglielmo Wiber, author of the previous study, says the benefits for kids in households with less books were much

lower than kids who had more access to books.

"In this sense we claim that books - like diamonds - are forever," [says](#) Wiber.

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