

## CROQUET -- HEALTH BENEFITS



As one of the oldest recreational sports in England, croquet has grown to become a popular niche sport in the United States, Australia, South Africa and Canada. Though it may seem like an easy game, the mental clarity, focus and precision required to be successful might surprise you. And the health and fitness benefits are tremendous, too!

Here are the Top 10 Health Benefits of Croquet as indicated by the (HFR) Health Fitness Revolution:

**Being outdoors:** A 2011 study found that outdoor exercise was associated with greater decreases in tension, confusion, anger and depression when compared to indoor activity. And a 2010 study found that even just five minutes of exercise in a green space can improve mood and self-esteem.

**Intellectually-challenging:** Croquet combines the intellectual puzzle-solving of a game like chess with an element of physical activity in which skills such as precision and a soft touch are needed to be successful.

**A fun way to get some mild exercise:** Playing croquet is a leisure activity that offers effective yet gentle exercise that is easy on the joints and not strenuous. The United States Croquet Association estimates that players walk more than two miles during an average match.

**Can be done at any age:** The non-strenuous, low-impact nature of the game makes it an activity that can be enjoyed throughout a lifetime. Croquet is low impact (just walking, bending and swinging a roughly two-pound mallet to hit a one-pound, solid plastic ball), yet it can be highly competitive, strategic, and mentally stimulating, with a major social

component where you will make many new friends.

**Can be played anywhere:** Grass courts can be informal lawns where friends and family play the game for recreational purposes, whether in backyards or parks, or formal grass lawns where players vie during competitive tournaments.

**Positive attitude:** Croquet encourages a positive attitude to life, which will help in all daily tasks; more specifically it encourages a “can-do,” “have-a-go” response to problems and an attitude of not giving up.

**Socialize:** Playing the game is an excellent way to meet new people. Croquet clubs mix people up and put partners together when doubles are played. Men and women play together on equal terms.

**Emphasizes good sportsmanship and camaraderie:** Croquet provides camaraderie among aficionados all over the world. Players vacationing in a foreign land will get a warm welcome if they choose to visit the local croquet club.

**Mental benefits:** Research shows that you can reap mental health advantages from playing being involved in leisure activities and sports. By putting your focus on the precision of hitting a croquet ball, it can clear your mind and relieve you of any stress you might be feeling.

**Improves self-esteem:** Croquet (and any other sport) can help to improve self-esteem. If you enjoy sport and really get into it, setting goals and achieving them will improve your self-confidence and your performance, too. When you have enough confidence in yourself to know that if things do go wrong, you can put them right, you can take it that bit further.