

# How Tom Daley has shown the nation a few things other than diving...the neuro of knitting!

by Usha Patel – Neurocognitive therapist at Raviv Practice London

This summer, we were all glued to our TV sets watching the Tokyo 2021 Olympics and nothing was more amusing than seeing Olympic Gold Medalist Tom Daley's knitting a pouch for his pending medal. So charming – we all went "ahhhh!"

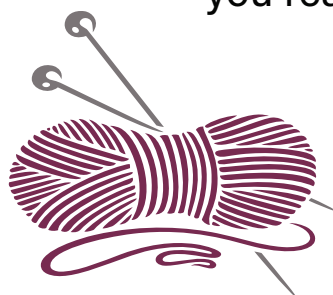
I couldn't help wanting to learn more about Tom. Digging around on the internet, I discovered that his education includes a grade A in Mathematics at A-Level. It did not surprise me one little bit. Those dives Tom does require precision, and a mathematical brain helps.

**So what is the link between knitting and being brilliant at maths?** The magic word is 'working memory' which is 'active memory' – it is what we need to hold pieces of information while thinking and doing – especially learning multi steps procedures. We need good working memory for various tasks: reading comprehension, mental maths, remembering a list of instructions, following a recipe and even knitting!

These are but a few examples of the things we do with good working memory. Basically, it is used for any activity where we need to both think and remember at the same time to perform the activity successfully. If you knit, you need to both remember and follow what you are doing now, as well as remember when the sequence changes. The more complex the knitting task, the more working memory is used.

**Why is this important to your children?** Working memory is a critical cognitive task. Without a strong working memory, children have poor attention, poor impulse control, are easily distracted, appear immature and can not keep to any task without constant reminders.

Working memory has its most significant development spurt from ages four to sixteen, reaching its peak at age 29. After age twenty-nine, it declines. The more you practise doing things that require you to remember and think simultaneously, such as mental arithmetic, recalling what you read (or see on the telly), and



following step by step instructions correctly, the more you can improve your working memory.

If you want to do a quick **free working memory check**, click **here**.

### Getting back to knitting

Knitting is a brilliant skill; aside from working memory, it also helps with finger and hand dexterity and developing:

- pincer & tripod grip - needed for writing
- hand grasp - needed for writing stamina
- hand/eye coordination - for tidy handwriting
- finger strength and fine motor control
- crossing the middle line
- motor planning.

I am all for knitting and yippee to Tom for bringing it to the attention of the entire British Nation! But, while you and your child might not fancy knitting (though I strongly recommend you give it a go – you might love it!), there are plenty of other activities that can help support these complex neuro-development skills.

There are lots of great beginner guide and videos to launch your knitting skill – **here is just one to get you started**.

**Raviv Practice London** helps those with fine motor problems as well as working memory problems. For more information, **click here** and book a free consultation or call **0203 887 0486**.



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