

## SURVEY

# Yes, COVID-19 May Be Having A Positive Impact on Household Dynamics

NewsUSA

(NU) - Turns out a lot of us actually like certain changes we've made in our lives while holed up at home since the coronavirus hit.

No, we're not talking about what turned out to be the not so stop-gap measures experts usually cite in arguing the entire world has been forever transformed due to COVID-19. Telemedicine. Telemeetings. Fist bumps -- well, okay, maybe not fist bumps, but (sadly) "handshakes may be one of the last things to come back," the Boston Globe reported.

Instead, a new survey of U.S. adults aged 18 and over provides rare insight into what could be the pandemic's long-term impact on individual household dynamics.

Think about it: Fifty-three percent of those surveyed report spending an extra 7.4 hours, on average, at home each day, which works out to be the equivalent of two additional days per week. And what have we been doing with that extra time?

We've been cooking together more (14 percent, allowing us to infer that nearly 36 million people are spending more time making meals) . . .

We've been sharing more chores (12 percent, meaning more than 15 million households -- and, yes, that includes the 66 percent of that figure who cited doing the laundry) . . .

We've been exercising or learning new skills together (22 percent), adopting new hobbies like cooking, drawing or painting (16 percent), and -- if you're looking for something truly uplifting -- generally getting to feel closer to family and friends.

"When the world feels chaotic, we often look for shelter and comfort in our homes as somewhere we can control," said Meik Wiking, CEO of the Happiness Research Institute and New York Times bestselling author. "That's never been truer than now."

The survey was commissioned by home appliance manufacturer Whirlpool Corporation, which also launched a new "Improving Life At Home" online hub replete with expert advice on everything from recipes to organizing garages, in



an effort to better understand how lives have changed in the last year. "It's been heartening to see some silver linings as new dynamics and habits emerge in homes everywhere," said Eleanor Reece, the company's senior director of global campaigns, in noting that 28 percent of those polled want to stick with the positive changes they've made.

Wiking, himself, is optimistic that many people's new-found "understanding that happiness is homemade" is here to stay -- even if some hobbies don't last.

And the guy the New York Times has called "probably the world's happiest man" has a few tips to help get us through the rest of this ordeal:

- **Carve out "me time" by disconnecting.** What "me time" with mandated remote home learning for school kids, you ask? "There is evidence," Wiking said, "suggesting that kids crave more attention if you're sitting with a digital device, like a mobile phone, than with something like a book or paper or a puzzle. So go old school."

- **Use a "retirement box" for decluttering.** Clutter can negatively impact your satisfaction with your home. Find out if you really, really need that collection of Russian nesting dolls, say, by putting it in a box, and -- if you haven't opened it within a certain time -- you've got your answer.

- **Keep learning and growing.** "Most people overestimate what they can do in a day, and underestimate what they can do in a month," said Wiking. "The important thing is to keep moving forward and not put too much pressure on yourself."