

# Strengthening family ties through online gaming

March 21 2019, by Len Canter, Healthday Reporter

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(HealthDay)—Video games provide unlimited entertainment, and

interactive ones can even help you burn off calories.

But you may not know that playing games—either in person or through shared online networks—can unite [family members](#) from many generations in meaningful ways.

Researchers at Concordia University in Montreal found that playing social network games, through Facebook for instance, offers [family](#) members a fun, common topic of conversation, and creates shared experiences, even though there's often no direct communication. That's just one of dozens of studies that have explored the benefits of family gaming.

One study done at the University of California, Davis, found that the more often family members play [video](#) games together, the greater their feelings of family satisfaction and closeness. What's more, because those with poor inter-family communication benefited more than those who already had good communication, video gaming can be a bridge to better relationships.

Family gaming can easily extend beyond those living in a single household. With more grandparents and other older relatives now using [social media](#) to get news about relatives, playing word games and other family-friendly choices can keep the generations better connected because these activities transcend age barriers. Playing can also help connect you to faraway relatives you may not have the chance to get to know in traditional ways.

The Concordia researchers also found that people feel a stronger obligation when playing with family members than with friends, which might further strengthen familial bonds in general.

While [video gaming](#) is now becoming a spectator sport rather than a

participant activity for many people, it's good to remember that being actively engaged at least with your family members can have benefits that go well beyond a scoresheet.

**More information:** Consumer Reports has more on [how to play video games with your child](#).

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Citation: Strengthening family ties through online gaming (2019, March 21) retrieved 10 April 2024 from <https://medicalxpress.com/news/2019-03-family-ties-online-gaming.html>

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