

183 Pleasurable Activities to Choose From

The bottom line is that when we're not feeling well we also often don't feel like doing anything. A simple fact is that getting out to *do* something often makes us feel a bit better. So we're in a catch 22 here. How do we get out to do anything if we don't have the motivation to do it. Ah ha! We often hold the common misconception that we need motivation in order to actually do something. The truth is, it is often the opposite. We have to do something, in order to get the engines moving to spark motivation. The first step is often the most difficult.

Just like our minds and bodies can work to spiral downwards when we're depressed, they can also work to spiral upwards. The trick here is to ask yourself, what do I feel like I actually can do in this moment. Maybe it's something small, and whatever you choose, scale it back a bit. For example, if you feel like you can go on a walk, ask yourself for how long. If 20 minutes pops up, plan on going for a 15 minute walk. The idea is not to push yourself and not to overdo it. If you push yourself and its too much, you'll get disappointed, then start think negative thoughts about the experience, which will turn to shame or guilt, and then to more lethargy. If you think you can go on a 20 minute walk and plan on 15, then you are likely to accomplish that. If you can accomplish that, then often times good thoughts and feelings will arise because you did it. Learning how to be present to the moment, or mindful, with your thoughts, feelings, and physical sensations can help you better recognize these good feelings that may seem like distant strangers who have been gone for too long.

So how to do we do it? Often times when we're not feeling well, our brains don't seem to function and the first barrier is to actually think of something pleasurable to do.

We'll bypass that hurdle by providing a list of 183 things that are possible to do as a pleasurable activity. Some of these will resonate with you while others will not. First, simply note the things on the list that have been pleasurable to you in the past or seem like they might be now. Second, choose which ones you think you are able to do. Third, whatever time frame you think you can do it for, scale it back (If 20 minutes, plan on 15). Fourth take that first step, knowing that it is the first step that gets the engines moving and later you may realize the motivation arise to do more, along with positive thoughts, emotions, and physical sensations. When these do arise, simply acknowledge them as they are, and let them be. No need to analyze them or figure them out, acknowledging them is enough. One last note, we have to apologize, we have lost track of where this list came from originally, so there is a reference to it.

1. Soaking in the bathtub
2. Planning my career
3. Collecting things (coins, shells, etc.)
4. Going for a holiday
5. Recycling old items
6. Relaxing
7. Going on a date
8. Going to a movie
9. Jogging, walking
10. Listening to music
11. Thinking I have done a full day's work
12. Recalling past parties
13. Buying household gadgets
14. Lying in the sun
15. Planning a career change
16. Laughing
17. Thinking about my past trips
18. Listening to others
19. Reading magazines or newspapers
20. Hobbies (stamp collecting, model building, etc.)
21. Spending an evening with good friends
22. Planning a day's activities

23. Meeting new people
24. Remembering beautiful scenery
25. Saving money
26. Gambling
27. Going to the gym, doing aerobics
28. Eating
29. Thinking how it will be when I finish school
30. Getting out of debt/paying debts
31. Practising karate, judo, yoga
32. Thinking about retirement
33. Repairing things around the house
34. Working on my car (bicycle)
35. Remembering the words and deeds of loving people
36. Wearing sexy clothes
37. Having quiet evenings
38. Taking care of my plants
39. Buying, selling stocks and shares
40. Going swimming
41. Doodling
42. Exercising
43. Collecting old things
44. Going to a party
45. Thinking about buying things
46. Playing golf
47. Playing soccer
48. Flying kites
49. Having discussions with friends
50. Having family get-togethers
51. Riding a motorbike
52. Sex
53. Playing squash
54. Going camping
55. Singing around the house
56. Arranging flowers
57. Going to church, praying (practising religion)
58. Losing weight
59. Going to the beach
60. Thinking I'm an OK person
61. A day with nothing to do
62. Having class reunions
63. Going ice skating, roller skating/blading
64. Going sailing
65. Travelling abroad, interstate or within the state
66. Sketching, painting
67. Doing something spontaneously

68. Doing embroidery, cross stitching
69. Sleeping
70. Driving
71. Entertaining
72. Going to clubs (garden, sewing, etc.)
73. Thinking about getting married
74. Going birdwatching
75. Singing with groups
76. Flirting
77. Playing musical instruments
78. Doing arts and crafts
79. Making a gift for someone
80. Buying CDs, tapes, records
81. Watching boxing, wrestling
82. Planning parties
83. Cooking, baking
84. Going hiking, bush walking
85. Writing books (poems, articles)
86. Sewing
87. Buying clothes
88. Working
89. Going out to dinner
90. Discussing books
91. Sightseeing
92. Gardening
93. Going to the beauty salon
94. Early morning coffee and newspaper
95. Playing tennis
96. Kissing
97. Watching my children (play)
98. Thinking I have a lot more going for me than most people
99. Going to plays and concerts
100. Daydreaming
101. Planning to go to TAFE or university
102. Going for a drive
103. Listening to a stereo
104. Refinishing furniture
105. Watching videos or DVDs
106. Making lists of tasks
107. Going bike riding
108. Walks on the riverfront/foreshore
109. Buying gifts
110. Travelling to national parks
111. Completing a task
112. Thinking about my achievements

113. Going to a footy game (or rugby, soccer, basketball, etc.)
114. Eating gooey, fattening foods
115. Exchanging emails, chatting on the internet
116. Photography
117. Going fishing
118. Thinking about pleasant events
119. Staying on a diet
120. Star gazing
121. Flying a plane
122. Reading fiction
123. Acting
124. Being alone
125. Writing diary/journal entries or letters
126. Cleaning
127. Reading non-fiction
128. Taking children places
129. Dancing
130. Going on a picnic
131. Thinking “I did that pretty well” after doing something
132. Meditating
133. Playing volleyball
134. Having lunch with a friend
135. Going to the hills
136. Thinking about having a family
137. Thoughts about happy moments in my childhood
138. Splurging
139. Playing cards
140. Having a political discussion
141. Solving riddles mentally
142. Playing cricket
143. Seeing and/or showing photos or slides
144. Knitting/crocheting/quilting
145. Doing crossword puzzles
146. Shooting pool/Playing billiards
147. Dressing up and looking nice
148. Reflecting on how I’ve improved
149. Buying things for myself
150. Talking on the phone
151. Going to museums, art galleries
152. Thinking religious thoughts
153. Surfing the internet
154. Lighting candles
155. Listening to the radio

156. Going crabbing or prawning
157. Having coffee at a cafe
158. Getting/giving a massage
159. Saying "I love you"
160. Thinking about my good qualities
161. Buying books
162. Having a spa, or sauna
163. Going skiing
164. Going canoeing or white-water rafting
165. Going bowling
166. Doing woodworking
167. Fantasising about the future
168. Doing ballet, jazz/tap dancing
169. Debating
170. Playing computer games
171. Having an aquarium
172. Erotica (sex books, movies)
173. Going horseback riding
174. Going rock climbing
175. Thinking about becoming active in the community
176. Doing something new
177. Making jigsaw puzzles
178. Thinking I'm a person who can cope
179. Playing with my pets
180. Having a barbecue
181. Rearranging the furniture in my house
182. Buying new furniture
183. Going window shopping