

Creative Ways to Spend Time During Social Distancing

As our current state of keeping distance from others continues, it is important to be creative about how you are spending your time and engaging your mind. By now, you have probably watched your fair share of television and movies. While fun TV shows and feel good movies can be a great distraction from our current circumstances, you may feel ready to shake up your quarantine routine and try some different activities. We have compiled a list of different activities that are perfect for breaking away from the same routine and trying something new! We challenge you to read through the list and choose an activity (or several activities!) to try out sometime over the next week. *And don't forget to include video or phone calls with your loved ones who are also navigating quarantine. Connection with our loved ones has never been more important.*

1. Take part in a *Larger than Life Science* webinar – Enjoy the *Larger than Life Science* program hosted by LaunchBio from anywhere in the world for free. Explore webinars like “Thinking Ahead,” which uncovers the promise and possibilities of regenerative medicine. Or, check out “Race for a Cure,” a fireside chat with Claes Gustafsson about the work that goes into developing a coronavirus vaccine. Register for a webinar at launchbio.org and you will be sent a link to join the webinar the day before the event. Missed an event that interests you? LaunchBio will post the content from each webinar on their website following each program.

launchbio.org

2. Download a free book – Project Gutenberg is an online library offering more than 60,000 free eBooks, available for download on your Kindle or for reading online. Select from classics like *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen and *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde.

gutenberg.org

3. Watch an educational or inspirational short film or live stream – The multimedia organization Explore offers short films for viewers of all ages to learn about topics including animal rights; health and human services; poverty; the environment; education; and spirituality. Alternatively, soothe your anxiety or simply change your environment at home by tuning into one of their live streams featuring animals in their natural habitats across the world.

explore.org

4. Go for a virtual tour at one of these museums.

The Louvre – The world's largest art museum offers free online tours of three of its most famous exhibits, which includes Egyptian antiquities;

<https://www.louvre.fr/en/visites-en-ligne#tabs>

Guggenheim Museum – Pablo Picasso and Jeff Koons are among 625 artists whose work is featured on the Guggenheim’s collection online;

<https://www.guggenheim.org/collection-online>

Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History – Take your time moving through the room-by-room tour of every exhibit in the museum;

<https://naturalhistory2.si.edu/vt3/NMNH/>

Getty Museum – Two virtual tours are available through the Los Angeles gallery, one of which offers a look at food in the Middle Ages and Renaissance;

<https://artsandculture.google.com/partner/the-j-paul-getty-museum?hl=en>

NASA – If science is more your speed, check out Virginia’s Langley Research Center or Ohio’s Glenn Research Center; <https://oh.larc.nasa.gov/oh/>;

<https://www.nasa.gov/glennvirtualtours>

MoMA – Take a peek at the New York museum’s extensive collection of art;

<https://artsandculture.google.com/exhibit/sophie-taeuber-arp/swKioHNhYqZoLw?hl=en>

Source: <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/travel/a31784720/best-virtual-tours/>

5. Take a virtual trip to one of these zoos

The Cincinnati Zoo – Take a tour of the Zoo at 3 p.m., when the Daily Safari airs on its Facebook Live Feed; <https://www.facebook.com/cincinnati-zoo/>

Atlanta Zoo – Add a dose of happiness to your day with a livestream of the zoo’s “Panda Cam;” <https://zooatlanta.org/panda-cam/>

Georgia Aquarium – Looking for something aquatic? This aquarium’s live cam features sea-dwellers like African penguins and Beluga Whales;

<https://www.georgiaaquarium.org/webcam/beluga-whale-webcam/>

Houston Zoo – The Texan zoo offers a plethora of creatures to check out, but fan favorites are the playful elephants; <https://www.houstonzoo.org/explore/webcams/>

Monterey Bay Aquarium – Do you look forward to Shark Week every year? Tune into the live online footages of Monterey Bay’s Habitat exhibit;

<https://www.montereybayaquarium.org/animals/live-cams>

Source: <https://www.goodhousekeeping.com/life/travel/a31784720/best-virtual-tours/>

6. **Go on a scavenger hunt** – Go on a walk outside or look within your own residence for the following items. Take a picture of each or write them down as you see them.

Gratitude Scavenger Hunt

Find something outside that you enjoy looking at	
Find something that is useful for you	
Find something that is your favorite color	
Find something you know someone else will enjoy	
Find something that makes you happy	
Find something that tastes good	
Find something that smells amazing	
Discover something new	
Find something that makes you feel safe	
Find something that makes a beautiful sound	
Find a picture of someone you are grateful for	
Find something that is unique to you	
Find something that you enjoy doing in the mornings	
Find something that makes you laugh	
Find your favorite place to spend time alone	
Find something that reminds you of the people you love	
Find a picture of a friend or a pet with whom you enjoy spending time	
Find something that you enjoy doing outside with friends	

Source: <https://www.naturalbeachliving.com/gratitude-scamenger-hunt/>

7. Try an online workout class specifically for older adults – Search for free exercise classes on YouTube, like the ones found below:

Slow and Gentle Yoga, *Yoga by Adriene* –
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kFhG-ZzLNN4>

Seated Chair Exercises, *HASfit* –
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8CE4ijWlQ18>

Jane Fonda: Walking Cardio Workout, *BeFiT* –
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_UabUNrjSE4

Pilates Workout, *themov* –
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=94n4sm7lp_E

6 Upper Body Strength Exercises for Older Adults from Go4Life, *National Institute on Aging* - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pUYxcRvdal8>

8. **Complete a puzzle** – Now is the time to bring out the puzzle that has been lying around your home, possibly a long-forgotten gift sitting in a cabinet or souvenir from past travels. The more pieces, the better to pass the extra time that you have on your hands.

Source: https://www.omaha.com/entertainment/quarantined-at-home-we-ve-got-ideas-to-help-you/article_94c21c0e-2b33-52d9-a4ba-d252d11c1ea7.html

9. **Watch a Broadway Show from your living room.** BroadwayHD is offering a 7-day free trial where you can stream your favorite Broadway shows from the comfort of your own living room. You can sign up for your free trial at: <https://www.broadwayhd.com/> and start streaming shows like the following:

Cats
Driving Miss Daisy
Kinky Boots
Peter Pan
An American in Paris
Les Misérables
The Phantom of the Opera
The Sound of Music

10. **Like to cook... why not star in your own cooking show!?** This one may take some planning ahead, but if cooking is your favorite pastime, this one is for you! The Food Network provides many full-length episodes of our favorite cooking shows online including: Barefoot Contessa, The Pioneer Woman, Trisha's Southern Kitchen, and Valerie's Home Cooking. Take a look at all the available videos here: <https://www.foodnetwork.com/videos/full-episodes>. Choose a video or (two!) with recipes that are appealing to you and then cook along with your favorite chefs. You can either select recipes based on ingredients that you already have in your kitchen or you can plan ahead and purchase ingredients the next time you visit the grocery store or place an order for groceries. Bon appétit!

11. Listen to bluegrass music by virtually attending MerleFest. MerleFest, considered one of the premier music festivals in the country, serves as an annual homecoming for musicians and music fans. MerleFest was founded in 1988 in memory of the late Eddy Merle Watson, son of American music legend Doc Watson. MerleFest is a celebration of ‘traditional plus’ music, a unique mix of music based on the traditional, roots-oriented sounds of the Appalachian region, including bluegrass and old-time music, and expanded to include Americana, country, blues, rock and many other styles.

MerleFest is pleased to share that artists and friends alike will join in honoring music legend Doc Watson during the week of May 25th-29th, 2020. To view the event, you can tune into MerleFest’s social media accounts during the week. The videos will go out each hour, starting at 9 AM. The links MerleFest’s social channels are below.

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/MerleFest/>

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/MerleFest>

Instagram: <https://www.instagram.com/merlefest/?hl=en>

12. Treat yourself to a spa night at home. Now is the perfect time to pamper yourself, take some time to relax, and treat your body kindly. Having an at-home spa night is a great way to do all of those! Your spa night does not need to be complicated. Light a candle, stream some relaxing music, and try an at-home face mask. Choose a face mask from this list: <https://www.cosmopolitan.com/style-beauty/beauty/a29506753/homemade-face-masks-diy-recipes/> based on what you ingredients you have and your skin type.

13. Try a SkillPop class. SkillPop strives to create environments where trying a new skill is affordable, accessible, and engaging. Though in-person classes are currently postponed, SkillPop is bringing expert-led courses to you in a live, online format via SkillPop Anywhere. Examples of classes include: water coloring, patio farming, cookie decorating, budgeting, and social media. You can check out all the classes that are available at <https://www.skillpop.com/classes>.

14. Take a trip to Disney without leaving your home. You do not have to go anywhere to experience the happiest place on Earth. Take your family (or just yourself) on a trip to Disney. You can choose from the ideas below or be creative and come up with your own ways to bring Disney magic into your home!

Take a (virtual) Disney ride: <https://www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/disney-vacations/virtual-disney-park-rides-worldwide>

Attend Disney’s Magic Happens Parade: <https://www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/disney-vacations/virtual-disney-parade-magic-happens>

Take a (free!) course and learn how to be a Disney Imagineer:

<https://www.travelandleisure.com/trip-ideas/disney-vacations/disney-imagineer-free-online-course>

Enjoy a Disney treat at home: <https://www.travelandleisure.com/food-drink/disney-dole-whip-recipe-3-ingredients>

15. Host a virtual game night with multiplayer apps. Both Apple and Google Play Stores are stocked with all sorts of apps to make your game night a reality. Below is a list of some of the best games to play with friends and family from afar:

Psych!

Scrabble Go

8 Ball Pool

UNO

Heads Up!

Yahtzee with Buddies

Boggle with Friends

Scattergories

Source: <https://www.thrillist.com/news/nation/online-games-virtual-game-night-multiplayer-apps>

16. Take a tour of over 30 National Parks via Google Earth. Google Earth has rolled out virtual tours of some of the most breathtaking parks in the country. The map and satellite imagery masters at Google Earth have put together a series of guided virtual tours of national parks around the country, providing a stunning glimpse of the trails and vistas. Simply click on any you want to see and you'll be whisked away to see a series of interactive photos and views of its most breathtaking trails and views. Lace up your (metaphorical) hiking boots and get started now: <https://earth.google.com>.

17. Write letters or cards to friends and family – and actually mail them! The magic of snail mail is far from vanished. Anyone and everyone would love opening up their mailbox to find a letter or a card from a loved one. Take the time to write a card or a short letter to a friend or family member who could use some extra love and encouragement. It is the perfect way to spend some of your extra time while you are at home while also brightening up someone's day!

18. Try virtual volunteering. VolunteerMatch is a long-running volunteer organization that matches passion and talent with important causes. They have hundreds of virtual volunteering experiences in areas ranging from health and medicine, children and youth, education, to community building. They have also created a COVID-19 hub specifically for coronavirus volunteer opportunities. Take a look at how you can serve others and get started today: www.volunteermatch.org.

19. **Play some brain games.** Keeping your mind active and agile can be challenging when you are stuck in quarantine. Thankfully, there are plenty of fun and educational brain games to help you stay sharp. Lumosity is an app developed by neuroscientists with over 60 games designed specifically to boost cognition and memory. The games can be played on Apple devices, Android devices, or on your computer. Check out the available games at: <https://www.lumosity.com/en/>.

20. **Get outside.** This is included on almost every quarantine activity list and for good reason! Fresh air and sunshine can work wonders for your mind and body after being cooped up at home. Whether you elect to take a walk, grab a book and read it while sitting outside, or enjoy a meal al fresco... find ways to get yourself outside. If you would like to take a walk, many local trails are open and waiting for you; however, please keep health and safety in mind. Wash your hands before you leave home and upon returning. Wear a face mask and keep your distance from others who are also enjoying the great outdoors. Find a list of local trails here: <https://www.visitchapelhill.org/blog/post/hiking-and-biking-trails-in-chapel-hill-and-orange-county/>.

21. **Watch a ballet performance.** If Broadway theater isn't your cup of tea... maybe you would prefer to view a ballet performance. Carolina Ballet has provided several videos of their ballets online for your viewing pleasure. You can access them at www.carolinaballet.com/performances/.

22. **Attend a virtual concert.** NPR Music is compiling a list of live audio and video streams from around the world, categorized by date and genre, with links to streaming platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube. Genres include: classical, pop, R&B, rock, folk, gospel, and more! You can check out the line up at: <https://www.npr.org/2020/03/17/816504058/a-list-of-live-virtual-concerts-to-watch-during-the-coronavirus-shutdown>.

23. **Watch a TED Talk.** Ted Talks are devoted to spreading ideas in the form of short, powerful talks. Topics are expansive and cover things like technology, science, business, health, nature, and community. Take a look at the available talks and get ready to be inspired: www.ted.com.

24. **Go to school.** Learning is a lifelong adventure. Take advantage of free online courses through Coursera! Every course on Coursera is taught by top instructors from world-class universities and companies, so you can learn something new, anytime, anywhere. Hundreds of free courses give you access to on-demand video lectures, homework exercises, and community discussion forums. Start your learning adventure at <https://www.coursera.org/>.

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