

How to Enjoy Time Alone

Sometimes two's a crowd. Try these tips to start enjoying your own company.

I often describe myself as an 'introverted extrovert'. I'm rarely the loudest person in the room, but I enjoy being around other people and energise from their company. One of my best friends, on the other hand, is an extroverted introvert. She's the life of the party but she'll get social burnout if she doesn't get time alone between socialising.

For many of us, spending time alone is inevitable. If you also draw energy from the world around you, you might find solitude hard to deal with, especially if you live by yourself. Here are some things that worked for me.

Put Your Phone Away

A lot of us use our smartphones more often than we'd like. If you're prone to scrolling through your social media feed, take a break for the time that you will be alone. This will help you to stop comparing your current situation with those heavily curated and handpicked moments on Facebook or Instagram. Save yourself from the fear of missing out by cutting out the newsfeed entirely.

Learn Something New

Is there a skill you've always wanted to master but never got round to? Try dedicating at least an hour of your regular alone time to practising a new skill. As you start to achieve goals while alone your brain will associate the positive dopamine hit with being on your own.

For me, this has been digital art. While there has been a learning curve to the software (in comparison to a pencil and paper), there is joy in learning new techniques and creating something aesthetically pleasing at the end. When I am alone, I think about what I can create next.

Write a Letter to a Friend

How often do we receive handwritten letters in the post? It can be a true delight to read someone's words and know that they've taken that time just to write to you. Writing a letter to a friend has a social element, in that it's a form of communication. Yet the slow movement of writing longhand, and having the time to think carefully about our next word, is a deeply personal activity. Doing something nice for someone you love is also a way of practising gratitude.

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Not sure what to write about? Describe your day/week, what you'd like to do the next time you meet up. Ask questions, even though your friend can't answer them instantly as in a spoken conversation, they can think about their responses and either write back or pick up when you next meet in person.

Consume **Mindfully**

The type of information we let into our brains directly affects how we relate to ourselves. Mindlessly consuming content that gives us no real value allows other people's ideas far too much space and influence on your own thoughts.

Of course, every book we read and show we watch is a product of someone else. But mindfully selecting what you choose to consume based on the value – enjoyment, knowledge or otherwise – that you will get from that piece of content means that you are closing the door to negative intrusions.

The best way to do this is stop when you are scrolling and ask yourself:

- How does this content make me feel?
- Is it really that entertaining?
- Will it add value to my life?

This can help keep you from content that inspires jealousy or anxiety, or content that simply steals your time.

Make an **'Alone Time' List**

Sometimes we feel we are bored because actually we are overwhelmed by choice. Whenever you see a suggestion for a film you might enjoy, a hobby or craft idea, or even an advert for a new takeaway place, jot it down. Make a list of new things to try for next time you're alone.

Whatever you do is completely up to you. That's the real beauty of spending time alone.