

# 20 Things to Do with 20 Minutes

Be fun, be creative, be productive

By [Denise Schipani](#) Posted July 08, 2008 from [WomansDay.com](#)



## 20 Things to Do With 20 Minutes

It might not seem like enough time to get much of anything accomplished, but you'd be surprised. Give a few of these a try.

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### Go on a clutter diet

Professional organizer Lorie Marrero of [ClutterDiet.com](http://ClutterDiet.com) helps clients split organizing tasks into "meals" (time-intensive projects) and "side dishes" (quickie tasks). So dig into a 20-minute side dish! Clean out your wallet or work bag, clear off the front of the fridge, or tidy one or two kitchen drawers.

Photo: © Comstock



### Learn something new

On [MonkeySee.com](http://MonkeySee.com), you can watch real-world experts in a wide variety of fields giving clear, easy directions for everything from applying red lipstick to barbecuing like a pro.

Photo: © Comstock



### Doodle!

Draw a funny picture and hide it in an unexpected place for a family member to find. Tapping into that childlike spirit, says Kim Kotecki, retired kindergarten teacher and coauthor of *The Escape Plan: A 40-Day Plan to Annihilate the Adulthood in Your Life*, brings joy and takes you out of your sometimes too-serious adult head.

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### Envision yourself reaching a fitness goal

If you've been avoiding signing up for that charity 5K walk/run because you think you won't finish, sit down, close your eyes and practice visualization by imagining the whole scenario. "What most professional athletes know is that if you're not able to see yourself finishing a race, you won't finish it," says sports psychologist Craig Kain, PhD. And it doesn't just have to be about fitness: Visualization can motivate you to accomplish practically anything.

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### Calm down

Spend some time sitting still and letting your thoughts flow. If worries enter your head, gently acknowledge and label them "thinking." "And remember to breathe into your belly, which releases endorphins and gives you a sense of well-being," says Ellen Adelman, PhD, director of the Sage Healing Institute in Elkins Park, PA.

Photo: © Comstock



### Make a short video

It takes less than 20 minutes on [Animoto.com](http://Animoto.com) to upload that handful of photos languishing on your hard drive—your last birthday, the school concert—and match it with music. The site does the rest, synchronizing the photos and music into a sharable video—and short videos are free.

Photo: © Comstock



### Use that avalanche of kids' artwork

Get clear adhesive plastic, trim artwork to the size of, say, a drink coaster or a bookmark, and cover. Voilà, a quick activity for you and your kids, and a nice gift for teachers and relatives.

Photo: © Comstock



### Pick up that yarn

Knitter Mary Beth Temple, author of *The Secret Language of Knitters*, recently took up spinning yarn on a wheel. "I love the fact that I'm not quite good enough at it to spin while distracted, so my mind stays focused." Engaging your mind with any task involving your hands—gardening, puzzles—can be extremely soothing.

Photo: © Comstock



### Grab the TiVo remote and watch a saved show

"I TiVo home improvement shows from HGTV that I want to see but don't have time for," says Deborah Goldstein, 33, of West Hollywood, California. "When you skip the commercials, it makes the perfect 20-minute break."

Photo: © Comstock



### Make a picture puzzle for that faraway grandchild in your life

This activity is rewarding, says Sue Johnson, coauthor of *Grandloving: Making Memories with Your Grandchildren*. Find a good photo of you and a child you love, glue it onto a flexible piece of cardboard and, once it's dry, cut it into puzzle-like pieces and pop it in an envelope with a note: "Put this puzzle together to see who misses you!"

Photo: © Comstock



### Write your own obituary

No, it's not morbid, say Kerry and Chris Shook, authors of *One Month to Live: Thirty Days to a No-Regrets Life*. Spending 20 minutes writing down the big accomplishments and how you think you may be remembered is a great exercise to help you focus on what else you'd like to accomplish going forward in your life.

Photo: © Comstock



### Tag clothes, toys and other items for charity or sale

"If I have a pocket of time, I'll organize bags of outgrown kids' clothes to list on eBay," says Apryl Chapman Thomas, 34, of Watkinsville, Georgia.

Photo: © Comstock



### Face the fridge

Investigate and get rid of questionable leftovers and past-sell-by foods, wipe down shelves, or unwrap the jumbo package of chicken breasts you bought and separate them into dinner-portion sizes for the freezer.

Photo: © Comstock



### Gather up paper recycling

(Old magazine on your bedside table, last week's newspapers, junk mail). While you're at it, pull out the grocery circulars and flip through them to see if a trip to a different grocery store might save you some money on your next food run.

Photo: © Comstock



### Start a blog

Free setup sites ([Blogger.com](http://Blogger.com), [WordPress.com](http://WordPress.com), [LiveJournal.com](http://LiveJournal.com)) make starting up fast and easy.

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### Have sex!

According to Dorian Solot, coauthor of *I Love Female Orgasm: An Extraordinary Orgasm Guide*, it can take about 20 minutes of stimulation for a woman to achieve orgasm. Don't like being quite so goal-oriented? Invite your spouse or partner to bed just to reconnect.

Photo: © Comstock



### Call a friend

If your block of time has a defined end (you have to leave for carpool or a meeting), dial that friend who normally rattles on and say, "I have 20 minutes to catch up—can you chat a bit?"

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### Try a simple yoga pose

...to feel refreshed, says Kelly McGonigal, PhD, health psychologist and yoga teacher at Stanford University. Set a timer for 20 minutes. Lie on your back, facing a wall, and slide your legs up the wall until they can rest comfortably. Support your neck with a small rolled-up towel. Close your eyes and place your hands on your belly to feel it rise and fall as you breathe.

Photo: © Comstock



### Give your vocabulary a boost—and help feed the hungry

On [FreeRice.com](http://FreeRice.com), you match words with meanings in a multiple-choice format. For every word you get right, the site donates 20 grains of rice through the United Nations to end world hunger.

Photo: © Comstock



### Spiff up your desk

Clear papers and wipe down the desk and your phone receiver with an antibacterial wipe. Use an air-blower or small brush to clear dust and crumbs from your keyboard, and give the monitor a wipe with an electrostatic cloth. Extra time? Clear out your e-mail inbox.

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