

5 minutes!



Kim
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199 activities to
put more life
into your life

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Introduction

What can you do in 5 minutes?

Quite a lot actually. You could give a powerful presentation; write an important letter to a loved one; spend precious time genuinely listening to your child.

And if you spend 5 minutes doing something regularly over a period of time, the difference could be enormous. 5 minutes a day taking time out to de-stress could be extremely beneficial; 5 minutes a day with a skipping rope could make a big difference to your level of fitness; 5 minutes a day taking small steps to expand your comfort zone could bring untold benefits.

Of course, you might just want to spend 5 minutes doing something fun or light-hearted, like reading the cartoons in the paper; sitting with your feet up and a nice hot drink; or chatting to a friend. These are important too.

This book gives many suggestions for how you can use 5 minutes. It could be a spare 5 minutes while waiting for the evening meal to cook; a 5 minute break between tasks; a regular planned 5 minutes daily, or any other situation where you have 5 minutes you could spend doing something useful.

Many of the activities are low-cost or no cost.

For some of the activities you may need to do some prepara-

tion beforehand. 5 minutes practising a musical instrument isn't going to go very far if you have to spend time digging your guitar out of the wardrobe and working out if it's tuned or not; 5 minutes dipping into a book won't amount to much if you are in the office and the book is in your car in the car park ... in the next street. If it is going to be a regular activity it pays to have the appropriate items ready!

★ Activities that require some form of preparation beforehand are marked with a star.

How to use this book

'5 minutes!' is split into chapters containing activities of a similar nature. Within each chapter are categories, each with five suggestions for 5 minute activities.

Of course, you don't have to prolong the activity for exactly 5 minutes if you finish early, nor do you need to stop after that amount of time. If you feel you want to carry on, then by all means do so!

Some activities may take several 5 minute sessions, for example tidying up your inbox or tidying up a room. In these cases you may like to set a timer for 5 minutes each time. The length of some activities may be dependent on other people, for example if you 'Call a friend who laughs easily' it may be a friend who is unable to limit their conversation to 5 minutes!

The topics may trigger ideas for other activities you would like to include so there is space for you to write your own, at the back of the book. There are also blank pages for the activities where it's suggested you write or make notes.

Enjoy!

Kim Chamberlain

People and relationships

Relationships

- Contact someone you haven't been in touch with for a while to rekindle your friendship. You could email, text, write, phone, send a card, connect on a social media site...
- Send someone a thank you message. It could be for any reason, for example for providing a service; for offering a listening ear; for helping you when you needed it; simply for being a great friend
- Have a quick meeting – standing up - with your family where everyone puts in their ideas for a fun day out. Choose one and decide on the day you will do it
- With your family members, choose a dinner plate that is different from any others you might use, and earmark this as the 'special plate'. When someone does something special, they will have their meal served on this plate
- Make positive comments on people's social media postings. A few words, even infrequently, can nurture a relationship connection

Marriage & relationships

- Write some 'love notes' for your partner and leave them in unexpected places, for example in their pocket, in the coffee jar, taped to the sun visor of their car, on the bathroom mirror, in their shoe

- Re-live a happy memory by discussing it with your partner, such as what attracted you to each other in the first place; the proposal; your wedding day
- Get out your diaries and book several date nights
- If your partner is feeling stressed, listen to their concerns and then give them a head and neck massage
- Send each other a text message saying ‘I love you because...’. Do it every day for a week, giving a different reason each time

Children, young

- Help your child to learn a simple rhyme that you learnt as a child
- Make up a story. Ask them to contribute, and include their ideas in the story. For example “What do you think the bunny’s name is?”; “And what do you think the girl did next?”
- Pretend that you are the child and they are the parent, and act out a fun scenario together
- ★ Create a quick and simple dress-up by making a crown out of paper, a robe from a towel or small blanket, and using a stick as a wand
- Walk round the house and count 10 red items

Children, older

- Sit down with them and ask if there is one thing you could do that would be of help to them
- Discuss their main interest or hobby. Really take an

interest

- Look round their bedroom with them and see if there is an item they could sell
- Ask them to teach you something simple
- Play a card game. The loser has to sing a song in as out-of-tune voice as possible

Share

- Share something that is special to you – that you don't normally share - with someone else. It could be a bar of chocolate, your favourite wine, a gadget, use of your car etc.
- Share 'silent time' with someone. Simply sit with someone and listen to the surrounding noises; or when you are out in nature, sit and silently observe and listen
- Have a family meeting where you each briefly share your views on a particular issue
- Share kindness. Write down as many ways as you can, in 5 minutes, the kindness you could share with others. For example could you offer to babysit; tidy a neighbour's garden; clean out your parent's garage; etc.
- Go onto a forum or suitable blog and share some of your knowledge, for example tips for health, finance, travelling, parenting ...

Fun and pleasure

Fun

- Play Twenty Questions. One person thinks of an item or subject. They can say whether it is 'Animal, Vegetable or Mineral', or can give a category, such as TV programme, Sports person, Food. The others have to guess what this item or subject is by asking up to 20 questions. The responses to the questions can only be 'Yes' or 'No', or 'Yes' 'No' and 'Maybe'.
- Sing along to your favourite song, preferably with others, as loudly as you can
- Have a pillow fight, in a safe environment
- Have a running race. Remember to do some warm up exercises first
- Play a quick game on the Wii, Xbox, or PlayStation

Books

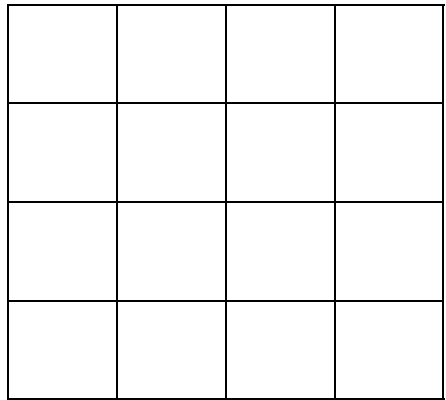
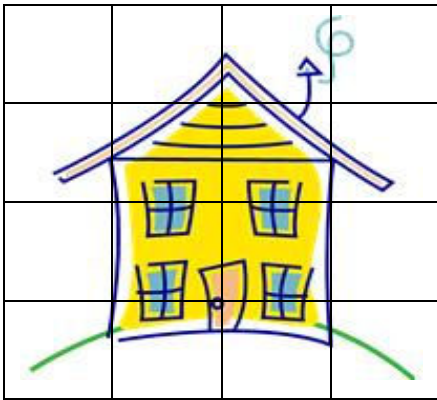
- Choose a book that you feel happy to part with. Tape a note to the front of the book saying 'This book is freely available for anyone to read. Please take it, and when you have finished reading, leave it somewhere for another person to use'. Leave it in a suitable place, such as in a café, on public transport, at the train station
- Pick out one of your factual books, such as a dictionary, user's manual, or fact book, turn to page 15 and see if you can learn something new

- Choose two or three books and see exactly how they are laid out. For example check what is on the spine, what is on the front cover, what is on the title page, where the dedication page comes, if there is a contents page or index, and so on
- Choose the oldest and newest books you possess. Study them to see what changes have occurred in book production over the years
- Choose a map book or a book containing a map of a real place, and study it to see the interesting place names and the layout of the area. Alternatively look at a detailed map of a place you are familiar with and see if there are any places you didn't know were there

Drawing

- Draw your family tree
- ★ Find a colouring-in picture, or draw one, or find one in a book, or print one off. Colour it in using only one colour. There are various colouring techniques you can use, for example light shading, heavy shading, pointillism (using small dots), vertical lines, cross hatching (short strokes vertically, crossed with horizontal strokes), placing a textured item underneath the paper and shading over it, etc.
- ★ Find a colouring-in picture, or draw one, or find one in a book, or print one off. Colour it in using as many colours as you like

- Study a small, simple item such as a book, cup or flower and do a simple sketch of it. Next time either aim to do it better, or continue with the sketch
- Copy a picture using a grid technique. Find a picture, draw a grid over it, then draw a blank grid the same size, and copy the picture into the blank grid.
For example:



Sing

- ★ Choose a song you don't know the lyrics to, print them off and sing along
- Choose a suitable song and sing a duet with someone
- In a group, sing a round. For example 'Row row row your boat', 'Frere Jacques', 'London's burning'
- ★ Sing the lyrics from one song to the tune of another. It will be easier if you can print off the 'alternative' lyrics so you don't get tempted to sing the original lyrics.
Great fun, especially when done with a group!

- If you have a home karaoke machine, sing along in pairs, in groups, on your own...

Nature

- Sit amongst nature, close your eyes and completely relax
- Watch clouds, preferably with someone else, and work out what shapes they make
- Use a poetry book or search online and read a poem about nature, or write a poem about nature
- Re-pot a pot bound plant
- ★ Go outside and collect as many types of leaves as you can in 5 minutes. In the next 5 minute session, see how many of the leaves you can identify

Memories

- Look over some old photographs, ideally with someone else
- Think about the best day of your life. Recall the colours, the sights, the sounds, the smells, the environment, the people. Especially remember your emotions
- Pick out an item you have had for many years. Think back to the time you acquired it and what has happened to it since
- Share your best childhood incident with a friend
- Create memories by writing a diary. There are many ways to write a diary. Your diary could be simply to create memories for yourself, a diary that no one else

will see, or it could be to create memories for others in the future. There is no right or wrong way to write a diary. Some ideas to consider:

- write it in the first person
- write it as a chronological overview of your day
- write down your reflections on what is happening in your life
- include how you feel and say why
- include photos, tickets, letters
- do some drawings
- include poems
- write down your plans, hopes, daydreams, prayers
- make it colourful

Show

- Show someone how to do something. It could be anything that can be done in 5 minutes, for example how to fold a napkin; how to do a mail merge; how to count to five in another language
- Show your appreciation of good customer service you have received. If you are still in the place, ask to speak to a supervisor to pass on your compliments. Alternatively write a brief note, send an email or make a phone call complimenting a person or an organisation
- Show someone a photo of something that is special to you, and explain why

- Show someone one of your favourite books and give a brief synopsis of it
- Show your support for a worthy cause. Take the first step by deciding on a cause you would like to support and finding out more about it, for example getting their contact details; subscribing to their newsletter; calling and asking for information. Alternatively start checking out what local, national or international community organisations or causes there are. For example your local voluntary service, or search online for a list of non-profit organisations

Silly

Sometimes it's good to stop what you're doing and do something silly!

- Get everyone in the house to put on their most ridiculous combination of clothes, and then take a group photo
- Sing along to a song, making up silly words to it
- Find a photo of someone in a magazine or newspaper and draw silly things on them – a moustache, big ears, etc.
- Play 'Silly Stories' with a group of people. Get something to write on that all people can see, such as a whiteboard, flipchart or large piece of paper. Two people stand up, with one acting as a prompter. The prompter asks the other player to start telling a story, for example 'My last holiday'. As they talk, the prompt-



er writes a word or short phrase on the board that isn't related to their topic, such as 'sausages' 'alien invasion' 'Albert Einstein'. The player has to adapt their story to include this word or phrase. The prompter writes a couple more words or phrases and the player has to use them while trying to continue the original story. After a minute another player has a turn; and so on

- Have several slips of paper. On half of them write the names of animals. On the other half write an adjective or emotion. Put the slips into two separate bags. One person at a time picks out one from each bag - the name of an animal and an adjective - and has to mime it, while the others guess. For example you may have to mime 'a pompous snail' 'a bored chimpanzee' 'an intellectual giraffe'

Word games

Answers are at the end

- Make as many words of four or more letters as you can from the word NEWSPAPER. Avoid using proper nouns and plurals
- First and Last Letters. Can you think of 10 words where the first and last letters alternate? For example, if the first word is 'REALLY', the next word would need to start with Y and end with R, the third word would then start with R and end with Y again, and so on.
Example: REALLY – YOUR – RAY – YONDER – RARITY – YEAR – RATIFY – YOUNGER – ROMANY – YORKER

Aim to choose words without 'difficult' first or last letters, for example F, I, J, V or Q, X, Z

Words to try include ARM, SHOT, ENTER, POOL, HINT, EVEN, MAIL, SOUP, COUNT, RACING

- Alphabet conversation. You need at least one other person for this. The aim is to tell a story, with each person saying a sentence that begins with a letter of the alphabet. Firstly choose a story topic, for example 'Planning a holiday'. The first person starts off with a sentence beginning with the letter A. For example "Are you going to book the hotel?" The next person says the following sentence starting with the letter B. For example "By the beach or in the town?" The next person says a sentence starting with the letter C, and so on until all 26 letters have been used
- Ten Words. Think of a word:
 - with six letters starting with G
 - with two-syllables ending in LL
 - that rhymes with teacher
 - that starts and ends with the same two letters
 - with 10 letters ending in E
 - with four letters that looks the same in the mirror
 - beginning with Q that has three syllables
 - that has more than five letters and ends in X
 - that has six letters in alphabetical order
 - with three Ks in it
- Choose any three letters and think of ten adjectives starting with each of the letters

Personal development

Personal Development

- Make a decision to do something that takes you out of your comfort zone today - or once a week - or every day for a year! Choose activities that don't endanger you. Write down the top five actions you are going to start off with, along with the dates you will do them – in the very near future. The more you confront your fears, the more your confidence can build and the more you get out of life. Can you decide to make an appointment with the dentist; agree to speak at an event; go to a party on your own; jump off the diving board at the pool; ask someone out on a date; leave your job; spend the day on your own; pick up a spider and look at it...?
- Think of an area of your life you would like to improve on for example your finances, public speaking, losing weight, improving your marriage or relationship. Go online and order a book about it
- It is said that successful people ask better questions, and as a result get better answers. What issue are you dealing with at the moment? Work out useful questions you can ask yourself about it, or chat with someone and ask them to ask you questions
- Unsure of what your real passion is? Start the process of finding out by taking a piece of paper and drawing a line down the middle. On the left hand side write down

things you love. Anything, no matter how big or small, especially those things you do when you don't have to and those things you dream about. On the right hand side write down things that challenge you or you find difficult. The items you put here are in your life to challenge you and build strength of character. The items on the left hand side are what you are here to do. Perhaps as a job, career, vocation, hobby or interest. This exercise may take more than one session

- Start a Gratitude Diary, where you spend 5 minutes a day writing down all that you are grateful for. It is said that when you think about all the things you are grateful for in your life then the law of attraction dictates that you will attract more just like them. Having an attitude of gratitude can help boost your feelings of self-esteem, optimism and motivation as well as having a positive impact on your health, relationships, and work

Stress Busters

- Sit down or lie down and do NOTHING
- Meditate. You can do this silently, or use meditation music, or play a guided meditation. You can find some online if you don't have a CD or similar. If choosing your own meditation, choose one you know, or read one and practise it, or ask someone to read one out to you
- Go for a jog. Remember to do some warm up exercises first

- Watch an entertaining YouTube video
- Do a puzzle, such as a crossword or Sudoku, or 5 minutes' worth of a jigsaw puzzle

Daydream

- Imagine you have won a million on the lottery. Work out exactly what you would do with it
- Imagine you could change your physical appearance to whatever you wanted. What would you look like?
- Imagine you could make a major beneficial change in the life or circumstances of one of your family members. What would you change?
- Imagine you could make a major change to one of the issues facing your country. What would you change and how would you do it?
- If an enormous change were to take place in the world, such as an end to poverty, hunger or war for example, how would the world be?

Contribution

- Who do you know who is lonely and could do with some company? Can you work out a way to help?
- Make your street more attractive for all – sweep up outside someone else's house; put a plant at the base of a street lamp; pick up litter from the kerbside
- Plan a way to contribute financially. Can you give a percentage of your income to a worthy cause? Some people arrange to have donations taken from their salary

- Speak to one of your neighbours and ask if they would like to help you organise a street barbeque
- When you are out at the shops, how can you spend 5 minutes giving to others? Can you give a smile to people; give a compliment to the shop assistant; give money to people collecting for worthy causes; give your car park ticket that has time remaining on it to someone else ...

Plan

- Plan how you can make the best use of the next 24 hours. Write down all the activities that *have* to be done, and then brainstorm the activities that *could* be done. Choose the most important you can achieve in the timeframe
- Draw up a plan for your evening meals for the week
- Make a note in your diary of birthday dates for family and friends along with dates when you are going to buy and/or send cards and presents
- Decide on a purchase you would like to make but cannot yet afford, then work out a plan as to how you will achieve it. It can be any type of purchase, from something inexpensive, through to a large purchase such as a house
- Draw up an escape plan in case there is a fire in your house. This may take more than one session. Get a leaflet from the fire service or local council or search online for 'Fire escape plan' and draw up your plan

Discover something new

- When out walking, driving or shopping, take a slight detour to a different street or different shop that you haven't been to before. See what you notice
- When food shopping, look at different shelves or different parts of the shop and buy a type of food you haven't tried before
- Go to the library and into a section you don't normally go to. Borrow an interesting book
- Try an unusual combination of drink, either alcoholic or non-alcoholic. There are many combinations you could choose
- Fancy a new occupation? Do an internet search on 'unusual occupations' 'different careers' or 'interesting occupations'. You might be inspired!

Contemplate

Contemplation involves focusing your thinking for a period of time. It can help you to gain more understanding of an issue, to feel calmer, or to gain insight into life. Before you start, take a moment to settle and feel calm.

- Look at an item such as a plant, flower, tree, painting, ornament or piece of jewellery and fully appreciate its beauty
- Look at the sky and contemplate the vastness of the universe

- Think about the amazing journey that long-distance migratory birds make
- Contemplate all the positive aspects in your life. What qualities have you been endowed with? What qualities have you developed? Which people are in your life that you appreciate? What have you contributed to others? Appreciate everything you have
- Think about what people might say about you at your funeral. What are some of the positive aspects? What might some of the negative aspects be? What can you do in the time you have left that will turn some of those negative aspects round?

Frustration

To deal with frustration:



- Burn off energy by doing something physical, such as going for a run, skipping, kneading some dough
- Use a journal to write down how you feel, and write the journal regularly. Or write what you would really like to say to someone in a letter or email to get it off your chest, but don't send it
- Stop; take a deep breath; take a break; remove yourself from the situation; have a cup of tea; go for a brisk walk
- Rant to a trusted friend or partner for 5 minutes
- Listen to music, whichever type will get you into a good frame of mind – calming music, fun music, rock ...

Imagination

“Imagination is more important than knowledge” Albert Einstein.

- Think of a character in a novel, film or programme. Now imagine what their life is like in detail. This is what the writer will have done to be able to create them. What were their parents like? What was their schooling like? What kinds of book would they read? What is in their wardrobe? What kinds of food do they eat? What are their views on religion? And so on
- Take a piece of paper and a few types of pens or pencils. Pick up a pen, close your eyes and draw random shapes. Then turn the paper slightly and using another pen draw more random shapes. Continue for a while. When you have finished, imagine that it is a very expensive work of art by a modern artist. Now give an explanation of the deep meaning of the work to an imaginary potential buyer
- Imagine what could be a simple suggestion to reduce the level of poverty in third world countries
- Think up a new invention that could be an alternative to using an umbrella
- Start a simple story either in your head or written down, starting with ‘When I left the house in the morning I met ...’ and continue the story. Each time you do this exercise, imagine a different storyline

Observe

When you are in a variety of situations, stop for 5 minutes and be an impartial observer. See how things work and what people do. See if you can notice a pattern, a rhythm or a particular way that things happen.

- When at a networking event, observe how people come together, how long they interact for, and how they split up
- Watch a debate or a politician being interviewed on TV and observe how people deal with tricky questions
- Observe how people go into or come out of a large event
- When watching a film, be aware of the *mise-en-scène*, the arrangement of everything that appears on camera—the set design and props; the lighting; the location; the costume designs and colours; the acting style
- Do some people watching, unobtrusively. For example sit in a café with a drink and possibly some reading matter, and observe people going past on a busy street or in a shopping area. It's interesting to watch body language, people's interactions, the speed that people walk at, what they are carrying, what their clothes say about them, how children behave ...

Skills and knowledge

Increase your skills



- Practise a musical instrument. Keep it easily accessible so that you can simply pick it up and start. Keep accessible anything else you might need, such as books, music sheets, timer. Practise a short section at a time. (Note this type of practice is aimed at those who want to learn for fun. More practice is needed for those who want to take it seriously)



- Learn a simple card trick. Find one in a book or look online. There are a number on YouTube. Over time you can progress from very simple tricks to harder ones. An easy one to start off with: Take two cards from the top of the deck. Make sure you hold them together carefully so that it looks like you only took one card. Show it to the other person. Then put the two cards back on top of the pile and this time take only the top card and place it at the bottom of the pile. Then turn over the top card and it appears to be their card
- Spelling. Think of a word you have difficulty spelling. Find the correct spelling and practise writing it out. Then practise including it in different sentences. Write this word on a sticky note and attach it to the bathroom mirror. Leave it there till you feel confident you can spell it. You may like to check online for a list of common spelling errors to see if there are any you need to be aware of. Common errors include such

words as accommodation, beginning, committee, definitely, development, government, independent, necessary, separate, successful

- Improve your balance. Physical balance is a learned skill and if we don't continue to practise it we are likely to become dependent on supports such as sticks and hand rails as we get older. Here are three simple balance exercises:
 - Stand on your toes. Do it in front of a mirror, for at least 30 seconds at a time
 - Stand on one leg. Do it in front of a mirror, aiming for 15 seconds at a time on one leg, then 15 seconds on the other. Keep your head straight, and look into the mirror
 - Stand on your heels. Take off your shoes and rock back on your heels and hold your stance. As the weight will be on your heels, keep focusing to avoid tipping over backwards
- ★ Practise a foreign language. Simple ways to increase your skills include: watch short videos; read children's books or comics; arrange to call or email a fluent speaker of the language on a regular basis; make up flash cards of useful words and carry them with you; listen to music and see if you can pick up any of the lyrics; memorise irregular verbs; ask someone to read out 10 words while you write them down then check the spelling; write out conjugations of verbs

Increase your knowledge

- Ask someone to share their knowledge on a topic you are not familiar with
- Sit in front of a computer, click in the Internet search box, close your eyes and type letters randomly. Follow some of the links it brings up
- ★ Obtain a book on a topic you know little about. Read or dip into it in 5 minute bursts
- Choose a topic you know little about and watch a short You Tube video on it
- Read a page of an encyclopaedia

Train your Brain

Answers are at the end

- Think of as many countries as you can that have five letters in them
- Write down the letters A to Z, one underneath each other. Now write down 26 girls' names, beginning with each letter of the alphabet
- Choose 10 single-digit numbers. Add them up. Then multiply them (e.g. $7 \times 6 \times 3 \times 9$ etc.). Work these out without using a calculator
- Look at 10 items around you. Now memorise them in alphabetical order
- ★ Get a pack of 52 cards. Shuffle them. Time yourself while putting them into the four suits in the right order




from Ace to King. Do it again, aiming to improve on your time

Language

- Think of someone you know whose main language you don't speak or don't speak well. Learn some phrases in their language. Use a phrase book, dictionary or go online. You could keep a phrase book handy and learn a couple at a time
- Teach yourself to say 'Hello' in three new languages
- Think of some foreign words or phrases in use in your own language, the original meaning of which you are not aware, and find out their original meaning. For example vis-à-vis, schmaltz, hara-kiri, ad lib
- Learn the meaning of an unusual word or two. Look in the dictionary or do an internet search on 'learn a new word' or 'unusual words'. For example, sublunary, syzygy, pelf, talipot, theremin
- We store all the words we know, not in any random fashion in our head, but in word-groups called 'Semantic Fields'. For example we would probably store the words *happy, laughing, amusing, smiling, funny*, and so on, in the same semantic field. For everyday speaking it's useful to be able to become familiar with our semantic fields, expand them, and retrieve words from them easily and quickly. One way to do this is practise thinking of as many words you can in a particular semantic field. Choose a word or concept and see how many words or phrases you can think of in the

same semantic field. For example Large; Clever; Red; Beautiful; Words that describe chocolate; Words that describe Australia

Coordination

-  Try juggling two items such as bean bags or balls. If you can already do this, use a larger number items
-  Do a simple drawing such as a house or Christmas tree on a piece of paper. Now get a small mirror and hold it at right angles to the paper so that you can see the drawing. Looking only in the mirror trace over your drawing
- Sit down. Clap your hands twice and stamp your foot once. Do this five times. Then clap your hands three times and stamp your foot twice. Do this five times. Now clap your hands once and stamp your foot twice. Do this five times. Finally clap your hands twice and stamp your foot three times. Do this twice. Repeat the exercise, doing it slightly faster each time
- Write a passage with your non-dominant hand. See how your writing improves over time
-  Get a skipping rope and skip. There are many benefits to skipping. For example it involves a high level of coordination and involves both sides of the body and both sides of the brain

Read

- Read a part of a newspaper or magazine that you normally skip

- Read a short poem and really appreciate the meaning of it
- Go onto a quotes website, choose a category and read a selection of quotes
- Read a blog post. It may be a blog you are already aware of, or you might like to search on a topic you are interested in and read an appropriate blog
- Read the small print of something you are going to sign

Speaking

- Build your public speaking skills and confidence by spending small, regular amounts of time speaking on a variety of topics. Give a mini-speech which has a short opening, a longer body containing two to three main points, and a short ending. Each time you practise, work on a different issue, for example how you enunciate, how you stand, how you will have eye contact with the audience, how you will bring in props, how you will use notes, etc.
- If you tend to slur your words or mumble, practise your enunciation by doing some speaking exercises. The more clearly you speak, the more people will see you as an educated, trustworthy person worth listening to. They will be able to focus on what you say rather than be distracted by how you say it. Work out something to say, preferably the kind of topic you would usually speak about. Stand in front of a mirror and say it as you would normally say it. Then say it again, this time slowing down slightly and being aware of your enunc-

ation. What can you improve? Ideally have someone with you as they are more likely to notice your speech habits more easily than you. To gain the most benefit you will need to do this on a regular basis over a period of time

- Learn to control your communication. Think of a communication situation that usually irritates or angers you. Do a role play with someone, training yourself to deal with the situation with a suitable level of control
- If you are going to a meeting where you have to introduce yourself and explain what you do, practise beforehand what you are going to say. Getting the first part of your contribution right will build your confidence for the rest of the meeting
- Practise impromptu speaking in a fun environment. In a group, get one person to start giving a presentation or telling a story and speak to it for around 30 seconds. The next person takes over and continues the presentation or story, and so on. This will enhance your listening skills and your thinking-on-your-feet skills

You and your body

Exercise

Do some stretching exercises and a warm up before you start, and finish off with a warm down and stretching to let your body recover. Please take medical advice before doing exercise if you are unsure

- Do some star jumps. Begin with your feet together and your hands by your side. Jump, raising both feet to the side while raising your arms to the side slightly above shoulder height. Finish with feet together and hands at your side
- Go on a treadmill, either walking or running
 - Begin slowly. If using a motorised treadmill, step on the belt once you know that it's moving at the slow set-up speed
 - Use the handrails only if you need to. It's OK to hold on when learning to use the treadmill or if you have balance issues, but otherwise let go when you feel comfortable and move naturally
 - Always look straight ahead, and don't turn if someone calls you
 - Always wear walking or running shoes, don't go barefoot
 - The first few times you may feel dizzy when you get off. This is normal and will stop
 - Don't read while using the treadmill
- Walk or run up and down some stairs. You can try tim-

ing yourself or seeing how many times you can run up and down in 60 seconds and aim to beat your score

- Do some step exercises, using the bottom step. Simply step up and then down. Smoothly step up with one foot, while keeping the other foot on the floor until you transfer your bodyweight onto your raised foot. Finish the movement with both legs straight
- Do some squats
 - Stand with your feet the same distance apart as your hips, keeping your knees, hips and toes in a straight line
 - Pull your belly button towards your spine
 - Imagine you are going to sit in a chair, and slowly lower your body
 - If possible go down until your bottom is in line with your knees, checking to see that your knees are behind your toes
 - Keep the weight in your heels, and slowly bring your body back to the starting position
 - At the top of the movement, do not lock your knees, keep them slightly bent
 - Afterwards stretch your quadriceps and hamstrings

Your body

- Ask someone else, if possible, to check your body for marks, moles etc. and make a note of them. Check on a regular basis to see if there are changes
- Give your breasts or testicles a health check, feeling for


any lumps or changes

- Move every part of your body – stretch your mouth, rotate your neck, shoulders and arms. Continue through all parts of the body
- Give yourself an eyesight test. Do a search online for a free eyesight test
- Give yourself a hearing test. Do a search online for a free hearing test

Walk

- Walk on the spot, starting off gently and becoming more energetic
- Have a brisk walk before you eat. It can speed up your metabolism
- Walk for 5 minutes while counting your steps or using a pedometer. Next time see if you can increase the number of steps
- Walk up the stairs instead of taking the lift
- Get off the bus a stop early and walk the rest of the way

Health

-  Prepare some raw fruit or vegetables to keep as a handy, healthy snack. Store them in a suitable container
- Drink a glass of cold water or a cup of hot water. You can add a slice of lemon or some lemon juice. Drink it instead of the caffeine, sugar or energy drink you were



going to drink!

- Look in your fridge or food cupboards and take out at least one unhealthy item. Make a mental note not to buy it again
- Analyse your sleep. For example:
 - How much sleep do you get on an average night? Research shows that most average adults need about seven to nine hours of sleep each night
 - Do you have good habits that allow you to get to sleep easily? Do you drink coffee or other stimulants too late? Do you watch TV too late? Is your sleeping environment comfortable?
 - Do you lie awake worrying about things to do the next day? Could you write a to-do list to help you let go of the issues?
- Start a health journal. Keep a written medical history, and educate yourself about any family problems

Health treatments

- There are many therapies available. Researching a few for 5 minutes at a time can let you see if you would be interested in finding out more about them.
For example:
Acupressure; Acupuncture; Aromatherapy; Alexander Technique; Biofeedback; Bach Flower Remedies; Chelation Therapy; Chinese Medicine; Colonics; Cupping; Craniosacral Therapy; Dance/Movement Therapies; Dowsing; Ear Candling; Feng Shui; Feldenkrais Method; Flower Essences; Herbalism; Heliotherapy; Holistic den-

tistry; Homoeopathy; Hypnotherapy; Hydrotherapy; Iridology; Kinesiology; Lymph Drainage Therapy; Naturopathic Medicine; Reflexology; Reiki; Rolfing; Shiatsu; Sound Therapy

-  Check your first aid kit and see if contains the appropriate items. Decide if you have enough first aid kits in the appropriate places, for example in the house, in the car, at an activity you attend, at work. If you don't have a first aid kit make a note *now* to buy one. There are various recommendations for suitable items a kit should contain. Here's a sample: First Aid Booklet; Antiseptic wash; Dressings; Scissors; Bandages; Safety pins; Assorted plasters; Regular strength pain medication; Latex gloves; Adhesive tape; Gauze pads; Sterile cleansing wipes; Low grade disinfectant; Tweezers; Sting and bite treatment; Instant cold pack. There are also specialist kits for those in specific situations. It pays to check the requirements for your circumstances
-  Treat yourself to a nice relaxing bath. It can help you relax tensed nerves and give you some beneficial me-time. Prepare the environment by making it warm and inviting, for example use music and candles, put a relaxing essential oil in the bath water and get out your best towels. Afterwards apply a nourishing body moisturiser
- Spend 5 minutes at a time researching the health benefits of fruits, and how to make use of them in order to gain these benefits. Please also take appropriate medical advice. For example it is said that:

- Figs are good for those with diabetes, high blood pressure, breast cancer and for post-menopausal women
 - Bananas have a natural antacid effect that helps with heartburn. They can help diminish the effects of diarrhoea and constipation, while the potassium prevents the weakening of the body's bones
 - Kiwi fruits bring benefits to the respiratory tract to reduce wheezing and coughing and prevent asthma. They can reduce the risk of developing the eye-related disease ARMD, age-related macular degeneration
 - Pure lemon juice placed on wasp and bee stings will help relieve pain
- Laugh it off! 'Laughter is the best medicine'. Laughter can bring your mind and body back into balance and is said to have many benefits. It can, for example: trigger the release of endorphins; protect you from the damaging effects of stress; lower blood pressure; boost your energy; relax the whole body; relieve pain; protect the heart; boost the immune system; increase memory and learning; give you a mini-work-out; increase the response of tumour/disease-killing cells; help against respiratory infections; improve your breathing; improve alertness, creativity, and memory; improve your social life - if you can make people laugh, you're likely to have more friends; help relieve depression; boost your relationship. Laughter is as much about social relationships as it is about humour, and laughing with others is more powerful than laughing alone as it binds people together and

increases intimacy and happiness. There are many activities to make you laugh. For example:

In a group, play Chinese whispers; or a variation on this where instead of saying something to the next person, you have to mime an action to the next person, making sure the others look away

Look through some old photos

Play charades

Use a sock and entertain people with your sock puppet.

Watch a humorous You Tube clip (for example a baby laughing)

Post something amusing on Facebook

Read a joke book or a humorous quotes book

Find a screen saver that will make you laugh

Call a friend who laughs easily

Fashion

- Find some 'Before and after' photos of someone the same gender as you, for example in a magazine or on an image consultant's website. Work out the main issues that have been addressed from a fashion point of view. See if there are any ideas you could use or adapt for yourself
- Look through a fashion magazine or website and choose an outfit you would like. Work out a way to get it or something similar. For example can you order it through the magazine or online? Is there a suitable retailer in your area?
- Work out your clothing style. There are several ways to describe clothing styles for women. Here is a simplified

guide. See if you can work out your style. Alternatively arrange to see an image consultant.

- Romantic/Feminine. Likes soft colours, flowing style lines and materials such as silk that drape the body. Likes lace, ruffles, dainty jewellery, soft pinks and peaches
 - Classic /Dramatic. Likes simplicity, sometimes showing a level of authority in dress style. Likes tailored clothing with angular necklines, stripes, edges and neutral colour combinations
 - Casual /Natural. Likes comfortable clothing made of natural fabrics. Not keen on accessories, make up or fussy hairstyles. If wearing jewellery items, prefers ones made from natural materials
 - Expressive/Eclectic. Likes to be bold, creative and unique and can wear clashing outfits or patterns. Likes to use colour and wear expressive accessories and jewellery
- Work out your colour palette. There are several ways to describe colour palettes. Here is a simplified guide. See if you can work out which colours suit you. Alternatively arrange to see a colour consultant. Colour is usually separated into two main categories: cool (blue-based) which is often associated with winter and summer colours; and warm (yellow-based) which is often associated with spring and autumn colours. Some colours can be either warm or cool, depending on their make-up. For example a pink with a yellow base could be salmon, while pink with a blue base could be fuchsia.

- Warm colours include cream, orange, gold, warm yellow, beige, brown, rust, salmon pink, peach, lime, warm blue, teal.
- Cool colours include black, white, fuchsia, cherry red, purple, lilac, navy, turquoise, sapphire.
- Look in your wardrobe and throw away anything that is seriously out of fashion!

Your attire

- Look in your wardrobe and chest of drawers and check your clothes, jackets and underwear to see if they need repairing or cleaning. Are the seams coming loose, are there holes or tears, are buttons missing, are there stains?
- Check your footwear, shoes, boots, trainers etc. Do any need re-heeling, soles repaired, to be polished, insoles glued down, thrown away?
- Check jewellery and accessories. For example are the clasps holding the diamond in your ring securely; are the screws secure in your glasses or watch; are the fastenings on necklaces and bracelets OK?
- Women, check you are wearing the correct size of bra. To work out your size, you need two measurements. First, measure underneath your bust with the tape measure straight across your back. If it is an even number add 4", if it is an odd number add 5". So if your measurement is 32", your bra size is 36". If it is 33", your bra size is 38". For the cup size, measure the fullest part of your bust, and then subtract the first meas-

urement from this number. If the difference is minus 1", the cup size is AA, if 0" the cup size is A, if it's plus 1", the cup size is B, and so on

Something practical

Create



- Decorate a t-shirt for an adult or child using a suitable glue and haberdashery items such as beads, sequins or motifs





- Make a stress ball
 - Requirements: 2 balloons, scissors, flour, spoon
 - Method: Spoon as much flour as you can into one of the balloons, compacting it with the back of the spoon
 - Place this balloon inside the other balloon, putting the open side in first, making sure that flour does not spill out
 - Optional: Decorate it with a permanent marker pen



- Make a small book from a piece of paper. You need an A4 or similar sized piece of paper and scissors
Method. Fold your paper in half three times, until it is in eighths. Unfold the paper fully, and then fold in half once widthways. Using the scissors, cut from the middle of the centre fold down the crease to the middle point of the paper. Unfold the paper and fold it again *lengthwise*, so that the cut you made is at the top. Push the ends together until the cut forms a diamond shape. Continue pushing until it goes flat. Then crease all the folds.
Alternatively, search on YouTube for a video giving in-

structions

-  Take a photograph with a camera or your phone. Print it off and put it in a frame; or trim it and put it onto a blank greeting card or piece of card to make a personalised greeting card; or enclose it in a card to send to someone
-  Make a mini hot house for growing seeds
 - Requirements: Small plant pot, potting mix, a 2-litre soft drink bottle, seeds (such as tomato seeds)
 - Method: Place damp potting mix in the pot, almost to the top. Place a few seeds in the pot and water gently. Cut the top, tapered, part off the drink bottle and place it upside down over the top of the pot. Place in a warm, brightly lit area away from direct sunlight

De-clutter

- Look in the bathroom cabinet and throw away items no longer needed such as old medicines, almost finished bottles of shampoo and freebies from hotels that you will never use!
- Look through all the compartments in your car and throw or put away items that don't need to be there
- Tidy up your inbox, 5 minutes at a time
- Search down the back and sides of your sofa and chairs to see what you find
- Tidy out your handbag, purse or wallet. Take out what you don't need and then place the remaining items in

specific places. Make it a habit to always put these items in the same place

Answers

WORD GAMES

Words from 'NEWSPAPER' include words:

anew answer aper apes apse aspen asper earn earns ease enwrap
enwraps erase erne ewer nape nappe napper naps nares neap neaps
near nears neep newer news pane pans paper pare pares pars parse
pase pawn pawnee pawner pawns paws pean pear pease peen peens
peep peeps peer peers pees pens pere perp prase prawn preen
preens prep rape rapes rappee rappees rappen raps rasp reap reaps
renew renews resaw resawn resew resewn sane saner sapper saree
sawer sawn sear seen seep seer sene serape sere sewer sewn snap
snapper snare sneer spae span spar spare spawn spawner spear spew
spewer spree swan swap swapper swear sweep wane wanes wans
waps ware warn warns warp warps wasp wean weaner weans wear
wears weep weeps weer were wrap wraps wren

First and last letters

There will be many answers, including:

ARM – MALARIA – ALARM – MANTRA – AHEM – MYOPIA – ALBUM –
MANIA – AQUARIUM – MEDIA

SHOT – THIS – SWAT – TRUSS – SWEET – THUS – SLANT – TENACIOUS
- SIGHT – TETANUS

ENTER – RATE – EAR – RISE – EAGER – REVERSE – ELDER – ROSE – EV-
ER – RECOMPENSE

POOL – LAMP – PILL – LOOP – PAIL – LIMP – PENAL – LISP – PERENNI-
AL – LUMP

HINT – TOOTH – HAT – TENTH – HILT – TRENCH – HURT – TEETH –
HABIT – TICKLISH

EVEN – NOSE – EASTERN – NAVE – ELECTION – NAPE – ENSIGN –
NERVE – EMANCIPATION – NOTICE

MAIL – LOOM – MILL – LOAM – MALL – LOCUM – MENIAL – LUKE-
WARM – MARSUPIAL – LOGARITHM

SOUP – PASS – SHIP – PRESS – SLIP – PLUS – STAMP – PRECIS – SHOP
– POSSESS

COUNT – TACTIC – CAT - TOPIC - CABARET – TRAFFIC - CLOSET –
TRAGIC – CHANT – TURMERIC
RACING – GEAR – RING – GANDER - RANG – GLACIER - ROTATING –
GAFFER – ROWING - GEYSER

Think of a word

There will be many answers, including:

GARAGE; FOOTBALL; PREACHER; DECIDE; ABBREVIATE; TOOT;
QUARRELSOME; APPENDIX; BEGINS; KNICKERBOCKER

TRAIN YOUR BRAIN

Countries with 5 letters. Answers vary slightly, but can include:
Benin, Burma, Chile, China, Congo, Egypt, Gabon, Ghana, Haiti, India,
Italy, Japan, Kenya, Libya, Macau, Malta, Nauru, Nepal, Niger, Palau,
Qatar, Samoa, Spain, Sudan, Syria, Tonga, Wales, Yemen, Zaire

Girls' names

There will be many answers including:

Amy; Bethany; Christine; Delia; Evelyn; Frances; Gloria; Helen; Irene;
Jacinta; Kira; Lesley; Marian; Norma; Olive; Priscilla; Queenie; Rose;
Sheila; Teresa; Una; Vera; Wanda; Xanthippe; Yolanda; Zillah

List your own activities

List your own activities

Notes

Notes

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