

The Cure for Cabin Fever!

Christmas has come and gone. Winter is really here and there's just not a whole lot going on. We've made our New Year's resolutions and may already be struggling to keep them. Perhaps you're feeling cooped up and struck down by CABIN FEVER! What better time to think about hobbies and having some fun?

"Hobby" is the modern term which comes from "hobby horse" – a wooden toy meant to be ridden just like a real horse. From this came the expression "to ride one's hobby horse", meaning to follow a favorite pastime", shortened to "hobby". Today a hobby is an activity or interest pursued outside a person's regular occupation, primarily for pleasure.

There are many good reasons for having a hobby. Having a hobby can relieve stress. Studies show that spending time in a fun activity can replace negative thoughts with positive thoughts and feelings. It can lift your spirits. A repetitive activity, such as knitting, can be especially calming. A hobby can provide intellectual stimulation while, at the same time, relaxing you. A hobby can connect you to others sharing the same interests and encourage you to learn new things and grow as a person. It can help you maintain your own sense of identity, separate from your children or spouse. Beyond that, a hobby is a refreshing change from your daily routine.

How, you might ask, does the library fit in? We have the information you need to get started or to become more advanced in your hobby. If you don't already have a hobby, books like *Reader's Digest Crafts and Hobbies* or *Get a Hobby: 101 All-Consuming Diversions for Any Lifestyle* give a great overview of many different activities along with the tools and equipment that might be needed to get started. There are books about people and the hobbies they pursue such as *The Banana Sculptor*, *The Purple Lady*, and *The All-Night Swimmer* – describing hobbies, collecting and other passionate pursuits or *To Have and to Hold – An Intimate History of Collectors and Collecting*.

Active (biking, kite flying, scuba diving) or sedentary (reading, genealogy, calligraphy). Collecting (autographs, trading cards, rocks) or creating (jewelry, candles, painting). Whisper to your critters (dogs, birds, fish, cats) or talk to your plants (African violets, vegetables, orchids). Get vocal (recite, sing, debate) or write (journal, blog, letters). If these ideas don't toot your whistle, how about beer brewing, dumpster diving, falconry or mushroom hunting? Not to mention cooking. One of life's greatest pleasures is eating! Why not learn to bake a loaf of artisan bread or dip into chocolate? So many choices, so little time!

Once you've decided what you're going to do, come to the library to find out how to do it. We've got the books, magazines, DVD's or computers that will put you on the path to enjoyment and fun!

When you find the right hobby, you'll know. You'll look forward to doing it. You may even find yourself making time (that you never thought you had) to enjoy it. When you're thoroughly involved in your hobby, and have forgotten your cares, you'll finally be relaxed. And you can thank the library!

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