



Change the Pace: Strike Out on Your Own

Tired of spending time on the phone, calling friends or neighbors to see what's going on Friday or Saturday? You scramble to make plans, maybe try to get a date-just as long as you don't miss out on the latest happenings in your social circle.

Instead of keeping up with the social circuit (as usual), why not strike out on your own? Whether it's staying in or going out, enjoying time alone can be an empowering experience--plus it's a confidence-booster knowing how easily you can enjoy it!



Here are some ideas to get you rolling:

- **Pamper yourself.** Going out to eat or having a few drinks in a smoke-filled bar isn't always healthy, but staying in and giving yourself a facial or a pedicure and getting a good's night sleep IS!
- **Organize your home.** Do all that boring stuff you've been putting off for a year: re-organize your desk, clean out your closet; throw out old belongings from the attic. It may not sound fun, but if you turn on your favorite music or a movie while you're working, it's not that bad. Plus you'll have an enormous weight lifted off your shoulders and a sense of pride and accomplishment when you're done!
- **Learn to cook or some other indoor hobby.** You can never go wrong with cooking, especially if it's learning to cook healthy and delicious meals for yourself. If you already know how to cook or don't want to learn, take up some other hobby you can pursue on days you choose to stay in.
- **Try an outdoor sports activity.** Outdoor hobbies can be fun and adventurous-simultaneously getting you out of the stuffy indoors and into nature. A change of scenery and some fresh air is just what the doctor ordered. As an added plus, outdoor activities like canoeing, snowboarding, or hiking result in a more toned and in-shape body!
- **Read a book.** Feel like you're not as well educated on a particular subject as you'd like to be? Whether it's politics, world history or knitting, it can never hurt to read and educate yourself on something new.
- **Write a book.** It doesn't matter if you are not the next celebrity author - the point is that you do something you've always wanted to do (or thought about doing), but never made or had time for. How many projects have you thought of that you just can't imagine starting with your busy work schedule? "When I retire I can finally write/paint/sew/cook/create my masterpiece!" becomes "Tonight I can start my masterpiece!"
- **Volunteer at an animal shelter.** Playing with puppies and kittens for free, while simultaneously doing a good deed - that doesn't sound bad, does it? If animals are not your forte, pick some other community service that interests you (recycling, eldercare, wildlife preservation... the choices are endless).
- **Go on vacation!** Try something new and go by yourself - even if it's just a day trip to the beach, the mountains or the next town over, it's great to see a new place. You won't have to worry about

someone else's agenda or schedule. Getting out of your regular environment and expanding your horizons can be very relaxing and inspiring.

- **Work out.** Join a gym or some other sports team, class or group. Exercise increases levels of dopamine and endorphins in your body-the hormones that make us feel happy, confident and relaxed-so you're not only doing something good for your body and health, but for your emotional well-being!
- **Go out by yourself for a change.** If you don't have plans with anyone, try going on an outing by yourself-you never know what kind of adventure you may have! Some things are easier to do by yourself, like attending a concert or a movie, but why not hit a new locale that you've always wanted to check out? You may meet some new friends, and it can boost your confidence having the courage to go out solo. If you don't feel comfortable or get bored, you can always leave. Just remember to exercise **extra** caution!

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