



101
Natural Highs
for an
Amazing
Drug-Free Life

Cathy Taughinbaugh



TreatmentTalk.org

Sharing and Support For Addiction, Recovery and Treatment

101 NATURAL HIGHS FOR AN AMAZING DRUG-FREE LIFE

101 Natural Highs for an Amazing Drug-Free Life

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Design and editing by [Leah McClellan](#)

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Introduction

Has your life been all about drugs or drinking over the last few years or even most of your life? You've decided to get clean, and you're in recovery. Or maybe you've been straight for a while now and you've reached a plateau.

Whatever your situation—you're sober, you're straight—congratulations!

Now what? What do you do with all that wonderful time on your hands? There's so much to do and so much ahead of you now. But where and how do you get started?

You can get started right here. Browse through these 101 tips to get some ideas.

There's an awesome world out there ready to be explored. You might be searching for your passion or an opportunity to explore your inner spiritual self. Maybe you're looking to get fit, have a little fun, relax, or unleash your creativity.

Finding activities you love or are passionate about and enjoying life are two of the most important things you can do for yourself and your sobriety right now.

Old hobbies or activities that brought you joy may have fallen by the wayside. You might be hesitant to try something new. You're creating a new life for yourself, and my hope is that the ideas in this book will spark your interest and remind you of the wonderful world that's out there waiting for you.

Your mental, emotional, physical, and spiritual self will stay sure and steady when you make a plan, set some written goals for yourself, and make the commitment to do whatever it takes to live a healthy lifestyle. Eating well and getting enough sleep, for starters, will help the progression to a healthier body and mind.

101 NATURAL HIGHS FOR AN AMAZING DRUG-FREE LIFE

These 101 ideas may become hobbies for you or simply be things to do in your free time—they might even evolve into a new career. Being engaged with life and loving it is one of the most important parts of a drug-free or sober life.

Take some time right now to explore and rekindle those creative passions that you once had or find some new ones. Your new life may exceed anything you've ever imagined. Find yourself, believe in yourself and, most importantly, follow your dreams.

In the 11 sections that follow, browse through each and every activity, even if you don't think it's quite your thing. If you pause and give it some thought, you just might get interested, or it could remind you of something similar that you've always wanted to try or that just sounds interesting.

Give it a try! It could very well be a jump-start for your new beginning.

***Find your thing. Say yes to life.
Welcome back!***

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Part 1 Get Moving, Get Some Exercise



Exercise is often the going that moves us from stagnation to inspiration, from problem to solution, from self-pity to self-respect. ~ Julia Cameron

1. Play Badminton

Badminton was invented a long time ago, and it's an excellent aerobic sport that offers multiple health benefits. It's a racquet sport similar to tennis or volleyball, and it requires at least two players. You'll also need a net, lightweight rackets, and a "shuttlecock" which is a cork ball stabilized by lightweight feathers, often made of plastic.

Badminton has been an Olympic sport since 1992, and it's a fun, friendly sport

that doesn't require a lot of practice to master. Equipment for amateurs is relatively inexpensive, but it will definitely improve your fitness level. Check your area for an adult league through your city's recreation department, and learn more at [Wikipedia](#).

2. Play Baseball or Softball

You may have played on a little league team growing up or casually played ball with friends in the past. Maybe playing on a team isn't quite your thing, but if your friends play, you might enjoy helping them practice by catching or throwing the ball. Who knows? You might end up on the team.

Another great way to get people together in the warm months is to organize a baseball or softball game for a group of friends and spend a weekend afternoon having a good time. Interested in joining a league? Visit the [National Adult Baseball Association](#) to find a league in your area.

3. Basketball

Basketball is one of the most popular sports in the world. It's a fun game, a great way to get fit, and a sport that all skill levels and ages can enjoy. Basketball is an overall great workout and, since it's a team sport, it helps you to make new friends and practice being a good team player.

[Hoops Unlimited](#) is an adult men's league in Southern California, and you might have something similar in your area. Search online for adult basketball leagues for both men and women, and you'll find many throughout the country.

4. Ride Your Bike

Bike riding is one of the easiest ways to exercise. It builds strength, muscle tone, and stamina while improving your cardiovascular fitness. Riding a bike also improves coordination and helps to reduce stress. Besides all of that, it's just fun to be outdoors, pedaling away.

Whether you ride solo or get together with a group, you'll arrive at your destination more relaxed, de-stressed, energized, and happier about the world and yourself. A good place to learn more is the [Pedestrian and Bicycle Information Center](#) where you'll find information on safety as well as maps for your area. It's also just a great way to get around!

5. Join a Crew Team

Rowing is one of the oldest Olympic sports and the oldest sport in America. High school and collegiate rowing is referred to as crew. Rowing improves your heart, strengthens your muscles and, since it's a team sport, you'll experience the value of teamwork and cooperation over individual stardom. Rowing is one of the easiest sports to start because there are very few rules or techniques to learn. If you live near a body of water where crew events are held, contact the boathouse to learn about crew team opportunities. Find out more at [US Rowing](#).

6. Dance

Maybe dancing is your thing! It's one of many ways to happiness whether it's ballet, line dancing, salsa, or swing, and it's a great opportunity for self expression, which is important to everyone. Some of the benefits of dancing are that you'll become more comfortable with yourself, and that confidence will affect

every aspect of your life. It's a way to become honest with yourself and to eventually find the fulfillment that some of us are lacking. Every city has dance classes for youth as well as adults.

7. Football

You may have played football (American style) in high school or on a college team. Did you know you can still play in adult flag football leagues? Not only is football good for you aerobically, it's a character builder that can prepare you for a happier, healthier, longer life, plus it's a great way to make friends. It can give you a sense of pride, as it takes some courage to play football. You can also enjoy football by finding your favorite team and becoming a fan. If you're in the US, go to FlagFootball.org to learn about joining a flag football league in your state.

8. Soccer

Did you play soccer (football outside the US) as a kid and wish you could still play? Maybe you're a parent and never had the opportunity to play. Soccer can be a wonderful sport for adults as well as children, and it's a good way to get fit and stay fit. Why not play soccer as an adult? Playing soccer is a way to make friends, and being involved promotes self-esteem. Check out the North American Adult Soccer Association or your recreation center for information on local leagues.

9. Play Golf

What's better than being outside breathing fresh air and taking part in a physical activity for a few hours on a beautiful day? While nobody can claim that playing

golf has the exercise value of playing basketball or running, it's a great physical activity made even more beneficial when the player walks 18 holes instead of taking a cart. If you have trouble concentrating, playing golf can really help your concentration improve. Golf is a friendly game, and it gives players a chance to enjoy each other's company while competing. To learn more about golf, go to [Learn About Golf](#).

10. Work Out at the Gym

Do you want to feel better, have more energy, and maybe even live longer? The health benefits of exercise are hard to ignore—preventing excess weight by burning calories is the big one. At a gym, you have a choice of many types of exercise to keep your blood flowing smoothly, which makes for a healthier heart. It can also give you an emotional lift and improve your muscle strength while boosting your endurance.

Did you know that regular physical exercise can help you sleep better and improve your sex life? It's a great way to feel better, gain health benefits, and have fun. Learn more here: [How to Work Out at The Gym](#).

11. Ice Skating, Inline Skating, and Rollerskating

Any type of skating is a low-impact exercise that offers many health benefits, including heart health. It can provide a positive effect on many areas of your life because it's a good way to relax from the hectic stresses of work and life.

If you're interested in weight loss, you can burn a lot of calories while skating, depending on your skill level. Falling down while skating is the only risk associated with the sport, but falling and injuries are preventable by taking

lessons or reading up on how to minimize injury and protect yourself with pads, wrist guards, and helmets. Skating rinks and clubs are in almost every city. Learn more about inline skating [here](#), and browse through [Figure Skating](#) on About.com. Get a group together and go skating!

12. Karate

Karate is just one of many martial arts that offers several unique advantages for physical fitness. Your reflexes and coordination will improve, and you'll experience increased performance in all physical activities. Plus, you may find increased strength and stamina that will make you feel great all day with the added benefit of the confidence to defend yourself, if ever needed.

You'll also have better work and study habits with your improved concentration skills. Your general outlook on life may also be enhanced along with respect for yourself and those around you. Learn more at [All Karate](#).

13. Kickball

Remember when you were a kid and played kickball on the playground, in the backyard, or on a side street? You may not have thought about the sport since then, but you can, as an adult, join a kickball league. This is a great way to get a little exercise and be social.

The best part about kickball is that you don't have to be particularly talented to play—you just have to be ready to meet new people, be on a team, and have some fun. Get a group of friends together and get kicking! One place to start is the [World Adult Kickball Association](#).

14. Take a Pilates Class

Founded by Joseph Pilates, many Pilates devotees say they've seen improvements in flexibility, posture, and abdominal strength and decreases in back, neck, and joint pain. Pilates is the system of strengthening and stretching exercises designed to develop the body's core strength, mobilize the spine, and build flexibility. Pilates has become very popular, and classes can usually be found in any city through private companies, at gyms, or at your recreation center. [Pilates Method Exercise](#) provides more information about the exercises.

15. Go for a Run

If you're interested in stepping it up, go for a run. Running has many overall health benefits for both your body and mind and, with some discipline, it's an easy sport to start, even if you start slowly. Plus, after you've bought a pair of good running shoes, it's free. When you've finished your run, you'll really feel like you've done something. Run for your soul and for the fitness of your spirit! Here's a list of the top ten running sites from [Love to Know](#).

16. Skiing

What's more enjoyable than skiing down a mountain on white, crisp, pristine snow? Join millions of people worldwide who go skiing every year. Skiing is a very popular sport that's often compared to running and swimming as an aerobic workout, so it's no wonder that many people love skiing as a way to stay fit.

It can get expensive, but the good news is that you don't have to be an expert to have lots of fun and a great workout. To find out more about ski resorts, lodging, gear, ski reports in your area, maps, and snowboarding, go to [Ski Central](#).

17. Snowboarding

An avid snowboarder friend says that she loves snowboarding because “it’s the only sport that I’ve ever been truly good at. Most sports, except for snowboarding, never really came naturally to me. Knowing that I have full control of the board and can carve down the mountain is very empowering. I love feeling like I’m flying when I’m going down a steep mountain, but I still have complete control.” Learn more at Snowboarding.com.

18. Surfing

Riding a wave is exhilarating, and surfing can be so much fun that, by the time you check your watch, you've already been surfing for hours and don't want to quit! When you're surfing, you're constantly moving for your entire session, which results in an excellent extended workout. Surfing can also make athletes out of the most rooted couch potatoes. Those who catch the surfing bug will be eager to wake up at dawn every morning for the early “glass,” often continuing to their regular jobs afterward. Find out more at Surfer.

19. Swim Laps

Swimming laps in the pool is a lifetime sport that benefits the body and the whole person. When you swim a variety of strokes, swimming works almost all the muscles of the body. Plus, it’s a healthy aerobic exercise that’s not so hard on your body. A pool can be found in any city at a sports club or the local YMCA. Swimming laps can be good for your mind as well. It can feel very calming, you may find you’re able to do some creative thinking, or you’ll find that thoughts you didn’t know you had may come to the surface. Learn more at USA Swimming.

20. Learn to Tango

The tango may be the most difficult dance to learn, but learning to tango can be an opportunity to learn leadership, become a better follower, and develop teamwork skills. As you work with your partner, you'll communicate your next dance move by using body language. Dancing is one of the best ways to relieve stress among other benefits and, above all, learning to tango can be fun. From Boulder, Colorado, learn to dance the [dance of the heart](#).

21. Tennis

Tennis can be a wonderful social experience as well as a way to get outside and get some exercise. A game of singles (two players compete) is more of a workout than doubles (two teams of two players each), but either way, tennis can be enjoyed well into your later years. There are many reasonably priced local leagues and clubs you can join. Start off with a few lessons if you want to brush up your skills. You'll meet new people and, before you know it, you'll have a group to play with. Get connected at [Tennisopolis](#), The World's Biggest Tennis Social Network.

22. Volleyball

Playing court or beach volleyball can get you in top physical condition. It increases agility, hand-eye coordination, and fast reflexes as well as strength and vertical jumping ability. Volleyball is a very competitive, upbeat, hard-working sport which helps you get and stay fit and active. Playing on a team sport like volleyball teaches you how to be a good team player and learn or keep in practice with good sportsmanship. There are adult leagues in many communities, so check to see if there's a league near you. Learn more about the game [here](#).

23. Go for a Walk

Walking is a low-impact exercise with numerous health benefits that's accessible to just about everyone. It's a wonderful exercise for your body as well as your mind, and it helps to relieve stress and improve your mood. Things will not whiz by; you'll find that you really see them. Start slow, take baby steps, and then work into a regular walking routine. You'll look forward to getting outdoors every day. Check out [The Walking Site](#) or [Walking.org](#).

24. Water Aerobics

Water aerobics is a fun way to exercise. It involves a series of stretching and exercise moves that are performed in warm water. The water supports the body weight which helps reduce the impact on the joints and, although it sounds easy, it's actually a good exercise for improving strength due to the resistance of the water as you move. Water aerobics can benefit the mind as well as the muscles because the warm, relaxing water helps to reduce stress and increase energy. To find out how to do water aerobics [read more here](#).

25. Water Polo

Water polo is a combination of soccer, basketball, hockey, and rugby played in a deep pool. Because it's played in water, a player must be a very good swimmer. Water polo demands a lot from the body, and the health benefits stem from the difficulty of moving fast with the water's resistance against every move you make. It builds endurance and strength, improves cardiovascular health, burns fat, and builds flexibility. There are adult leagues in many cities, so check out [USA Waterpolo](#) for more information.

26. Take a Yoga Class

Yoga has been practiced for more than 5,000 years, and millions of Americans are enjoying its health benefits. It's so popular these days—hardly a trend anymore—because it improves flexibility, strength, posture, and more. The benefit of the deep, mindful breathing involved in yoga is that it improves lung capacity. Yoga means less stress and more calm as well as the ability to concentrate and be in a better mood after practicing. Practicing yoga helps maintain the balance in our lives between too much “sunshine” and too much “darkness.” Try a yoga class and see if it works for you. You can start [right here](#).

27. Zumba

Zumba lovers credit this dance craze with fewer inhibitions, sharper minds, and tighter abs. As with any cardiovascular workout, the benefits of Zumba can include calorie burn, increased aerobic threshold, more stamina, increased bone density, improved balance and muscle tone, less body fat, and lower blood pressure. Zumba is the perfect outlet for those who love to dance. It's an exciting workout and a way to meet other people. Find a class at [Zumba Fitness](#).

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Part 2 Enjoy the Outdoors



Adopt the pace of nature: her secret is patience. ~Ralph Waldo Emerson

28. Fishing

Fishing is a great way to spend time with family and friends. Take your kids fishing or just enjoy the time by yourself or with friends. Some benefits of fishing are personal relaxation and camaraderie as well as bonding with your family, and just being out in nature and spending a relaxing time relieves stress. Fishing also helps the environment in the US because money spent to buy fishing licenses goes back into the Department of Fish and Wildlife where it funds research for fish and wildlife habitats. Check out some [top fishing sites](#).

29. Go for a Hike

When is the last time you took a hike and explored nature? It's a great all-body exercise and one that you can participate in almost year round, depending on

your weather and climate. The benefits include weight loss, decrease in blood pressure, improved bone density, and relief from back pain. The best part is that hiking is inexpensive plus, as you complete more advanced hikes, you'll gain self-confidence. The psychological effects of spending time in nature are almost unlimited, and you'll feel renewed for life back in the "real world." For information and inspiration about local US hiking trips, visit the [Sierra Club](#).

30. Ride in a Hot Air Balloon

You can have a once in a lifetime experience riding in a hot air balloon. Moving at the speed of the wind can be so amazing that some people have called it a Zen-like experience. Even if you have a fear of heights, you can overcome it and still have an enjoyable experience by looking at the horizon rather than down. If you want to get involved—just watching the balloons is amazing—but would rather stay on the ground, you can follow a balloon and meet it when it lands. To find out more, check out [Hot Air Ballooning](#).

31. Go Fly a Kite!

Do you remember flying a kite as a child? On the next windy day, rekindle the child within or recruit a family member or friend and help them discover the joy of flying a kite. It can regenerate energy, reduce stress, and give you a break from the tension of everyday life. Kite flying develops creative thinking by making the kite (if you make your own), flying, and adapting it. Another benefit is the development of concentration. It's a low-budget, environmentally friendly activity that's very safe as long as you stay clear of overhead power lines and watch the weather (flying a kite in a lightning storm isn't smart though Ben Franklin is famous for it). For inspiration, visit [Into The Wind](#).

32. Spend Time in Nature

Get outdoors and spend some time with nature. If you live in or near a rural area, you're in luck and can probably just step outside your door for a nature fix. In the city it takes a little more of an effort. A short drive will, in most cases, get you away from the city for a leisurely hike, bike ride, or camping trip. Reconnect with our natural world and take time to really appreciate birds, animals, trees, flowers, clouds, the sun—it will do your soul some good. Here is a site with beautiful photography to whet your appetite: [Nature Photographers Online Magazine](#).

33. Have a Picnic in the Park

Weather permitting, you can always have a picnic in the park. Take a hike with a picnic destination or pack a basket and head out to any park, even if the only place to have your picnic is on a bench. Being outdoors and spending time with nature can renew our souls and bring a sense of comfort. There is the added benefit of the quality time spent with family or friends—or even just yourself. There's nothing better than a breath of fresh air in the middle of nature. Find picnic ideas, recipes, and more information [right here](#).

34. River Rafting

River rafting is a fun nature adventure which involves a rubber inflatable raft that's navigated down a rapidly flowing river. White water rafting can be considered an extreme sport when the water is very high with treacherous obstacles, so be prepared and find out what kind of rapids you'll likely come across. Guided river rafting trips can be a good choice because you'll have an experienced guide who knows the route and potential hazards. Some of the

benefits of river rafting are that it's a great workout, an adrenaline rush, a stress reliever, and an opportunity to experience exciting team building. For the less adventurous, try a float trip or tubing when rivers slow down mid-summer. For more information, go to [Rafting America](#).

35. Watch the Sunrise

Plan a morning to get up early and watch the sunrise. It's a beautiful scene as you witness the start to a brand new day. Breathe in the cool morning air as you sip your coffee or tea and know it's too early to think about your tasks for the day. You just have to see the world before it gets too busy and feel the serenity of it all as the world awakens like a newborn child. Watch the sunrise as it reminds you that we can all have a new beginning, something so close to heaven.

36. Watch the Sunset

Watching the sunset over the ocean or mountains is a wonderful ending to your day. Doesn't lying in some open field or on the beach watching the sunset sound perfect? The bright orange and yellow colors are brilliant. As the sun sets, sometimes you can see the [green spot](#) which lasts for only a second or two—it's really an amazing thing. If you blink, you miss it. If your eyes stay open, the sight is just marvelous. Even if you live in a city or town, sunsets can be magnificent.

37. Stargaze

Have you seen the Milky Way or the Big and Little Dippers lately? Star watching is considered a romantic pastime, but it has purpose beyond dreaming and idle

gazing or as something only hobbyists and astrophysicists do. Studying the stars can give a person a sense of the history of the planets, our planet Earth, and the galaxies. It can be a relaxing and enjoyable time as we contemplate the world beyond us. To find astronomy-related resources visit the [Stargazing Network](#).

38. Just Feel the Sun on Your Face

Just lie for a moment on those warm, sunny days and feel the rays of the sun shine down on you. I'm not encouraging you to sunbathe for hours, but 10-15 minutes of sitting in the sun, even in the morning, late afternoon, or evening when it's not too strong, allows your body to soak in necessary Vitamin D. Even on a cold winter day, the sun can be warming as it shines through a window. It can also give your mind a rest or be a time of quiet, peaceful meditation. The connection you have with nature may become more clear to you as you feel the light, be the light, and take in all the goodness.

39. Travel

Travel can be fun and a great way to see things you've never seen before. Some people tend to get stressed when they travel, so if you're like many, you might be able to decrease the stress by making sure you know where you are and where you're going. You can discover new places, have a relaxing time, and learn a new culture and the history of the area you've traveled to. Traveling is an adventure waiting to happen—even if you don't go very far! [Kayak.com](#) is one place to start, but the Internet is loaded with travel information. Bon Voyage!

Photo credit: [Frank Kovalchek](#)

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Part 3 For Techies and Computer-savvy Folks



These technologies can make life easier, can let us touch people we might not otherwise. ~ Steve Jobs

40. Start a Blog

Why not start a blog? It can lead you down paths you've never imagined. A blog is an online journal where you write about your life, your hobbies, or your passion. If you love to write, you have an instant voice for your work when you go online with your blog. It can even be a part of your business; these days, many companies, even the smallest, have blogs.

Starting a blog is easier than you think, and there are many free blogging sites available. Blogging can be a hobby or it can become your business. To learn the basics and get connected, try WordPress.com or Blogger.com.

41. Film a Video

Making a video is so easy these days that everyone seems to be doing it. Your video can be for business, education, or just for fun. Low-cost digital cameras and even your cell phone can create professional-looking videos. You may want to get some editing software or a dedicated video camera as you get more experienced.

When you're producing videos, use what you have on hand, and remember that your video doesn't have to be perfect. Upload your video to [YouTube](#) and share it with the world. Try it, it's fun! Want to enhance your video skills? Check out these great [tutorials](#).

42. Build a Website

Do you want to have fun, share information about your hobby, or enhance your business? Freelancers often use a website to display examples of their work in an online portfolio.

A website is especially important if you're starting your own business, and many new business owners sell their products and advertise while developing their professional images. Millions of people will have access to your business information, or you can focus on a local following by having your website URL printed on your business cards and listing it with some local referral sites.

Your own personal website can also be a wonderful way to feature your hobbies or interests just for fun and friends. Get started at [How to Make a Website](#).

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Part 4 Around the House



A man travels the world over in search of what he needs and returns home to find it. ~ George Moore

43. Build Something

From a birdhouse to a boathouse and everything in between, it's all about building something you're passionate about and can be proud of. There's not much you can't do with a few simple tools and some wood. Building a birdhouse is a great first-time or family project, and it's a fun way to do something with children. For directions on how to build a birdhouse, read more [here](#).

44. Decorate Your Home

Surrounding yourself with beauty lifts the spirit. Decorating your home allows you to live beautifully each day, and it creates an environment that you love to come home to. Add your own touches and make your home reflect your

personality. Many times paint is all you need, and a little color can do wonders to change the look of a room. Rearranging some furniture, changing the curtains, tossing a few pillows on a sofa, and laying down a throw rug or two are just a few inexpensive changes that can add your personal touch to any house or apartment. Ask a friend for help if you feel challenged. For some ideas go to [HGTV](#).

45. Collect Something

Are you into stamps, coins, teacups, figurines, or maybe beach glass? The possibilities are endless. Collecting can cost money or not—beautiful stones, pebbles, and seashells are free. A friend loves buffaloes, his college mascot, and he has enjoyed collecting buffaloes large and small ever since. Yes, it does mean a few more things to dust, but if it gives you pleasure, why not? For history and more information about collecting, read more on [Wikipedia](#).

46. Cook a Meal

Cooking brings family and friends together, and many people don't just cook to eat; they're passionate about food. Learning to cook a few favorite dishes can be fun and will make you feel more confident. Cook something you love and enjoy your creation! Or try something new if you're tired of the same old thing. A beautiful cookbook is a treat, but you don't have to buy one since you can find almost any recipe online. For starters try [Epicurious](#) and [All Recipes](#), plus there's a great app for iPhone: [How to Cook Anything](#).

47. Plant a Garden

Gardening gets you out in the sunshine and fresh air and creates beautiful surroundings. What uplifts anyone's mood better than looking out into your special garden? Even in the city, you can grow flowers and vegetables in pots on a balcony, roof, or even in a window. Tending your garden relieves stress and provides a break from routines. The work is mainly physical, and gardeners have a chance to think about their concerns, meditate, or just daydream and feel a sense of accomplishment. Two fun sites to give you some ideas are [Gardening Gone Wild](#) and [Loving Nature's Garden](#).

48. Design the Landscape of Your Home

If you own a home with a yard, you know that nothing welcomes visitors more than a well-designed landscape. A few flowers and well-placed greenery can add charm as well as add to the value, usability, and aesthetics of your home. By creating different areas for outdoor cooking, eating, games, and relaxation, you'll have more living options. Most important, you'll feel proud of your piece of the world. [The Landscape Design Site](#) has more information.

49. Set a Beautiful Table

A meal tastes better when the table is beautifully set, and it adds a little excitement to the occasion. A fun centerpiece, a pretty table cloth, and napkins—even if they're paper—creates a wonderful memory. There are no hard and fast rules for setting a table, and even a tiny table can be beautiful with a few wildflowers in a glass. Use what you have, with a little imagination! Try [Beauty and Bedlam](#) for a description and diagram of how to set a beautiful dining table.

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Part 5 For Music Lovers



I merely took the energy it takes to pout and wrote some blues. ~Duke Ellington

50. Go to a Concert

Are you ready for an alternative to watching TV at home? Go to a concert! The excitement of going to a concert can give you a rush of adrenalin that's good for your heart among other benefits. Listening to live music is just enjoyable and good for your emotional well-being. There are concert halls, music festivals, bands, and open mike venues in every town and, during the summer, you can always find local concerts in the park.

To find out more read "[Ten Reasons Why Going to Concerts is Good for Your Health.](#)"

51. Play an Instrument

Music has many health and stress-relief benefits. Creating music can be a wonderfully relaxing hobby as it absorbs your attention fully and becomes a vehicle for creative expression as well. Learn to play an instrument if you don't already, or start where you left off—maybe you have a guitar gathering dust in the attic. Not only can it be engaging for you, but it's also a wonderful gift to share with others. To find out why it's good to play an instrument, read [this article](#).

52. Listen to Music

Music is the language of the soul, and it's no secret that most people love music. Listening to music has health benefits for people of all ages: it eases pain, reduces stress, reduces your heart rate and blood pressure, stimulates brain cells, boosts exercise performance, promotes sound sleep, increases optimism, and helps spiritual health as well as socialization. Music promotes movement and affects your body as well as your soul, mind, and spirit. Music on CDs can be found for free at your local library, or check out the selections at [iTunes](#).

53. Sing

We may not all be headed for American Idol, but singing is a gift and something we can all do, even if it's just in the shower. Sing alone or, if you do have talent, join a chorus group that performs in your community as well as other cities. This may even give you the opportunity to travel for your performances and meet new people and make new friends. Do you want to sync your voice to a singing website? Read more [here](#) and check out the links on practicing and recording yourself singing on the computer. [Back to top](#)

Part 6 For Those Who Love a Performance



I regard the theatre as the greatest of all art forms, the most immediate way in which a human being can share with another the sense of what it is to be a human being. ~ Oscar Wilde

54. Act in a Local Production

Have you ever tried your hand at acting? You lose yourself for a time and take on the characteristics of another person. There are local productions in almost every community. When you dare to step out of the box and choose to act, you'll not only make interesting new friends and gain confidence, but you'll also create memories and fulfill your dreams. Find out when the next audition will be held and try acting. Read about Lance Ekum and his plunge into acting in a local production: [Our town](#).

55. Teach a Class

What is your area of expertise? You may have it hidden deep inside, but it's still there and maybe it's a skill you can teach to others. There are many places to teach a class, but if it's a hobby, try your local recreation department, library, senior citizen center, adult classes at a local high school or community college, or private organizations. If you need a job, stores might need someone to teach people how to use the products they're selling. Do you speak another language? You can make a short video demonstrating basic skills for anything and upload it to [YouTube](#). Who knows where it will take you!

56. The Movies

Watching movies has become convenient for everyone these days. You can watch them in the theater, on television, or even online from the convenience of your own home. Films are based on people's experiences whether they are fiction or not, and watching problems played out on the screen visually can be very beneficial. Not only are movies entertaining, they can teach us how to solve our problems in real life—or what approaches just don't work. To find ratings and what's playing in your area, go to [IMDb](#). And it's never long before a film is available to rent, buy, or borrow from your local library. Try a foreign film for something a little different!

57. Go See a Play

In all large cities and many smaller towns there are theaters that feature the latest Broadway plays or community productions. Ticket prices can vary, and often there are walk-up tickets available on the day of the show for Broadway

productions. Watching a play can take you to another world for that moment, and it can be an enjoyable and exhilarating experience. There are many tickets sites for every area, but to pique your interest, check out what's popular on [Broadway](#).

58. Write a Screenplay

Writing a screenplay is telling a story that you or someone else can turn into a play or even a movie. It's a long shot, but your writing may come to life one day, and using software such as [Final Draft](#) or [Scriptware](#) might be helpful. Have something to say, add drama, begin with a bang, know your characters thoroughly, use a three-act structure, and employ turning points. Keep your scripts between 100-120 pages, and register with the [Writer's Guild of America](#). Don't be discouraged, but of course hang on to your day job. Learn more [here](#).

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Part 7 When You Love Words



Writing and reading decrease our sense of isolation. They deepen and widen and expand our sense of life: they feed the soul. ~Anne Lamott

59. Read a Book

One of the most enjoyable experiences in life is reading. It not only expands your vocabulary and makes you smarter, but it can also reduce stress and bring greater tranquility as you sit quietly and read.

Go to faraway places and learn about other people's lives. E-readers have made reading even more accessible, but you can also read for free with books from your local library. Find the books you want to read through the [Interlibrary Loan System](#), at [Amazon.com](#), or at your local independent bookseller. For inspiration read Leo Babauta's article "[How to Read More: A Lover's Guide.](#)"

60. Learn a New Language

Learning a new language at any age is an enormously rewarding experience. It boosts your confidence to not only be able to speak with people in their own language, but also to be able to say “I know a second or third language.”

Our minds are much more like a muscle than we realize, and they need to get cognitive exercise. Those who know or learn a second language can improve their memory, speech, and sensory perception. Plus, you get a wider view of the world with a bigger, richer vocabulary when you learn another language, and you'll understand your own language better.

To start online check out [How to Learn Any Language](#) or languages at [About.com](#). In addition, [Rosetta Stone](#) sells very effective software for language learning.

61. Write a Poem

Writing a poem is all about observing the world within you and around you. You can write about almost anything—happy times, sad times, love, or the rainbow after a spring rain—in many different ways, and it doesn't even have to rhyme. As long as you're enjoying it or finding a release of tension through it, you're on the right track.

Poetry may seem popular only with a certain segment of society, but plenty of people love poetry, and it's more mainstream than many of us realize. To learn more about poetry, visit the [Poetry Foundation](#). To connect with other poets and share your poetry, go to [Poetry.com](#) (membership required).

62. Write in a Journal or Book

Many people have found journaling to be a great stress reliever and a way to express feelings and find answers. Writing, whether in a personal journal, blogging, or even as a professional novelist, can be cathartic, relaxing, and provide something wonderful to share with yourself or others.

I love writing using Julia Cameron's technique of "the morning pages." Simply write what comes to you in your stream of consciousness and write three pages a day. Your imagination will be set free, and you will tune in to your inner feelings. For more information read *The Artist's Way* by [Julia Cameron](#) or *Bird by Bird* by [Anne Lamott](#).

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Part 8 Get Creative!



The creative is the place where no one else has ever been. You have to leave the city of your comfort and go into the wilderness of your intuition. What you'll discover will be wonderful. What you'll discover is yourself. ~ Alan Alda

63. Make a Ceramic Pot

Ceramics is a wonderful hobby. There's something special about working with your hands and creating something with clay—it takes focus, imagination, and a sense of fun. It can even expand who we are and how we connect to ourselves and the environment. You might be amazed at your creations, and it's not as difficult as you might think.

And you don't have to buy equipment to try it: take a class! Pottery shops and art centers can be more than just places to create art—they can be fun social experiences. Find out more [right here](#).

64. Bead Some Jewelry

Beading is another way to be creative and express yourself. It's relaxing, it's a great stress reliever, and it keeps your mind occupied on your project. It's also a way to connect with friends if you get together with fellow enthusiasts, bead together, and have fun. Maybe it will become your passion that you enjoy as a hobby or take it a step further and make it into a business. Why not try beading and see if it's for you? Visit the [Art Beads Learning Center](#) to find out more.

65. Take Up Knitting

Creating beautiful gifts for yourself and others is one benefit of knitting. It's also a wonderful way to take time for yourself and reconnect with your spirit. The repetitive motion can get you into an experience of "flow," or it can at least provide an outlet for nervous energy. Knitting has been shown to increase right and left brain interaction because, since you use both hands to knit, both sides of the brain are stimulated. Knitting is also a way to calm down and relax as well as practice patience. One place to find patterns and more information is [Knitty](#).

66. Needlepoint

Working on a needlepoint project is a great way to pass a few hours. Needlepoint has a long history, going back to the ancient Egyptians using small, slanted stitches to sew their tents. Two benefits of needlepoint are relaxation and the creation of beauty. When you've finished a project, you'll have a pillow, a wall hanging, or even a holiday stocking for your favorite friend or relative. To get started, go to [The World of Needlepoint](#).

67. Paint a Picture

Painting can change your life. It's not only a wonderful way to relax, it also helps bring creativity into every aspect of your life, and the result may be something personal and beautiful that you can enjoy and share. Through painting, you'll discover in yourself a greater awareness of the beauty of nature and all things. Plus, you'll gain self-esteem and a confidence you never knew you possessed. You can get started right here: [Painting](#) at About.com.

68. Photography

Whether you simply learn to take better pictures of your friends and family or delve into the world of creating true art, photography can be a great hobby or career. As you practice seeing the world through the lens of a camera, you may begin to see things differently. Not only will you have an entertaining hobby that you can call your own, but you will observe and share our beautiful world. Get started at [Beginner's Photography Blog](#).

69. Make a Quilt

It does seem strange, at first, to think about cutting good fabric up into little pieces and then sewing them back together again. Quilting, however, can be an exciting hobby for connection, expression, and enjoyment. When we make a quilt, we make something unique which reflects our true selves, and it's a way to express our creativity. Quilting is another form of art, and who wouldn't love to receive a warm quilt made from the heart? For inspiration go to [Valori Wells Designs](#).

70. Make a Scrapbook

Share your memories with friends and family or make a keepsake for yourself. Making a scrapbook can help you to let go of some of the sadness and shame that you might be feeling from your addiction. A scrapbook of your recovery can bring you comfort and be a record of where you have been and how far you have come. You can choose a traditional or digital scrapbook and take a look at the [ten best scrapbooking websites](#) to get started.

71. Sewing

Sewing can be very rewarding. What a great feeling it is to wear something you created yourself! Not only can you make clothes, you can sew almost anything from pillows and pillow shams to curtains, purses, and pet beds. There's no limit of ideas for the creative sewing mind. Find a sewing class at your local recreation center or a fabric or sewing machine store and start stitching. Here is a list of the [10 best sewing sites](#). The creativity will inspire you.

Photo credit: [Ewan Traveler](#)

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Part 9 For All Animal Lovers



Until one has loved an animal, a part of one's soul remains unawakened. ~ Anatole France

72. Adopt a Pet

Pets are friends with fur or feathers. Visit your local humane society or a private animal shelter and consider adding a pet to your family. Before adopting, though, decide whether you have the time and means to care for a pet—they need careful, regular care, and some of that can get expensive, especially health care.

If you're not ready to adopt, consider volunteering your time. Animal shelters are always in need of dog walkers, cat cuddlers, and general help, and organizations such as your local Humane Society or [Guide Dogs for the Blind](#) are always looking for volunteers. Visit the [Humane Society](#) to find out what's happening in the animal world.

73. Go Horseback Riding

Dogs and cats can be great sources of fun and companionship, but a horse can also be a wonderful, devoted friend. Riding takes you through scenic mountain trails, along the beach, or down a local trail. You'll see new sites from a higher vantage point, and you'll have the opportunity to be grateful for the wonderful world that we live in.

Horse therapy has become popular because communication with the animal soul can be so very comforting. Find a horseback riding company [near you](#).

74. Visit the Zoo

When is the last time you went to the zoo, a wildlife refuge, or a wildlife park preserve? You don't have to be a kid to enjoy getting in touch with our earth's other living beings. Check out your local zoo and see what's new.

Appreciating nature's wildlife is one more way to feel gratitude for all earth's creatures who play a role in ensuring human survival. Consider volunteering at a zoo or animal sanctuary. And if you're ever in Washington D.C., visit the Smithsonian's [National Zoo](#)—admission is free!

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Part 10 Like to Play Games?



We don't stop playing because we are old; we grow old because we stop playing. ~ George Bernard Shaw

75. Bocce

Bocce is a relaxing sport that can be played on a bocce court or even at the beach or on a lawn, indoors or out. Players attempt to roll a large ball as close as possible to a smaller ball, and it can get very competitive. Courts are made of grass, carpet, clay, and various other materials; as long as the surface is relatively flat, you can play bocce almost anywhere.

It's a great game of skill and strategy for anyone to play regardless of age, and you can get social with friends or play through a league. Find a league in your city through your local recreation department. To learn about the game, go to the [United States Bocce Federation](#).

76. Bowling

Bowling is a fun team sport, and leagues are available for the serious bowler. It's a sport that can be played by kids and seniors alike. Bowling doesn't require top physical fitness, but it does require flexibility, so it's important to warm up and stretch before a game. It's a good way to relax, socialize, and get rid of stress, plus it's a fun way to be competitive.

Bowling can be a lot of laughs, and it's a great way to spend time with family or friends. It also gives you the health benefits of walking, and throwing the ball requires strength and burns calories. Check out Bowl.com for information on leagues, rules, and tournaments.

77. Cards

Do you have a favorite card game? Card games have been around for centuries. Today, they range from the classics like gin rummy and solitaire to collectible card games featuring thousands of different deck types. Most card games require several players which provides social interaction while engaging in a little friendly competition. It involves strategy, it's good for the brain, and players can be challenged to learn and improve on their own. Card games can be played just about anywhere. Check out this [list](#) of card games from A-Z.

78. Crossword Puzzles

There are many benefits to doing crosswords or any other puzzle on a regular basis. Crossword puzzles keep your mind busy and help develop and improve vocabulary and spelling. It reduces tension and eases anxiety. Doing a regular crossword puzzle is just fun, so enjoy yourself. Your thinking will be more clear,

and you'll do better at work. It feels fantastic when you complete a crossword. People who do crosswords regularly will tell you that they can see how their brain is working overtime because of the level of puzzle they are doing. [Boatload Puzzles](#) is one place to start.

79. Ping-Pong

Throughout the world, people play ping-pong or table tennis for exercise, recreation, and socializing. Ping-pong trails only soccer as a participant sport, and all you need is a table, two paddles, and a ball. After that, anything goes. There is little risk of injury, and it develops good hand-eye coordination and improves reflexes. It's easy to play, but it has been described as "high-speed chess" and is available year-round as a social outlet. Ping-pong fans even have a slogan: "Table tennis: anybody, anytime, anywhere." Go to the [International Table Tennis Federation](#) to learn more.

80. Play Pool

Pool—also known as billiards—is a fun game of skill that's easy to learn and a good challenge for your dexterity. Though it won't likely make you break a sweat, playing pool counts as light exercise since you're constantly moving around the table to assess plays and take shots plus bending and stretching.

Try [Generation Pool](#) or enter "billiards" and your town or city in your favorite search engine to find a pool hall near you. Note: although pool is often played in bars, there are many centers that serve only non-alcoholic beverages and cater to teams, tournaments, and families. Check before making plans.

81. Rummikub®

Rummikub® is a really fun game played with tiles for four friends or family members. It's completely different every time you play, and everyone has a chance to win. Though luck does play a small part, it's mostly strategy.

It's relatively easy to learn once you get the hang of it, and the best part is that it doesn't get boring and becomes more engaging as you become a better player. This is a great game that will give you hours of entertainment with family and friends. Find out more right [here](#).

82. Scrabble®

Playing Scrabble® is not only fun, but it's also one of the top choices for many board game enthusiasts. Scrabble® helps you learn new words and definitions, and it can also improve your memory, enhance your language skills, and exercise your mind muscles for long-term learning and retention.

With a smart phone, the apps “Scrabble” and “Words with Friends” are right at your fingertips. Get a game going in real time for live social connections or online. Check out [Welcome to Scrabble](#) to learn more.

83. Sudoku

Are you playing Sudoku yet? Sudoku is a popular logic puzzle that's not only challenging but entertaining as well. Puzzles can be easy, medium, or hard, and novices and pros alike can play and have fun.

The object of the puzzle is to have nine squares with the numbers 1 through 9 in each square, and no identical numbers can be on the same row or column. Once

you've mastered the basics, you can time yourself to see how quickly you complete the puzzle. Apps are available for smart phones and iPads, or go to [Web Sudoku](#) to play online and print out puzzles.

84. Play a Wii™ Game

Wii Games, which simulate the motions of actual sports, is a way to spend some time and have some fun. The games are popular with both teens and adults, and they're even used in rehabilitation facilities to help patients recover from strokes or head injuries. A little exercise is one of the benefits. The console is compact, light, easy, and fun to play. Find out more at [Wii](#).

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Part 11 Find Your Spirituality



When I use the word spirituality, I don't necessarily mean religion; I mean whatever it is that helps you feel connected to something that is larger than yourself. ~ Dean Ornish

85. “Accept what is.” Eckhart Tolle

Accept what's happening in your life. Leave denial and control behind. Surrender. When you let go, you will feel more relaxed and less stressed. Our regrets can be left behind and our worries can ease. Accept your past, plan and look forward to tomorrow, but live for today.

Eckhart Tolle is the author of *The Power of Now*, *A New Earth*, and other popular books. His teachings have already helped many people throughout the world find inner peace and greater fulfillment in their lives. Browse through his books, check out the videos, and learn more at [Eckhart Tolle](#).

86. Pay Attention to Your Breath

Are you as focused as you would like to be? Many things interrupt us and derail our focus. While going about your day, stop and just listen to your breath from time to time. This will boost your focus and calm your mind throughout your day. If you feel stressed or overwhelmed, just stop for about a minute. Close your eyes, pay attention to your breath. Count three full inhale-exhale cycles, slowly open your eyes, and resume what you were doing. That's it—so easy and simple. Try this yourself and see if it's helpful to you.

87. Light a Candle

Lighting a candle can just set the mood. It can bring serenity, focus, and comfort. Lighting a candle can be enjoyable and also bring a little celebration to the moment. Whether you're having company over, reading, writing in a journal, spending time alone or with your family, lighting a candle can make the moment special. Lighting a candle for a specific purpose or intention is practiced worldwide. It symbolizes bringing light to our wishes or desires.

88. Connect with Other People

Connecting with other people is the single most important thing we can do for our happiness. Care about other people by thanking them when appropriate, encourage others to follow their dreams, and be polite. Listen empathetically by imagining you're in another person's shoes, and show interest by asking questions and withholding judgment. Ask how you can help others without anticipating what's in it for you. Finally, don't forget to tune into and share your inner goodness. Check out [Relationships That Nurture Your Spirit](#) for more.

89. Focus on One Thing at a Time

Distraction can have us floating through life and letting details slip by, unnoticed or forgotten. Give family members and friends your respect by listening to them when they're speaking, which will encourage reciprocal behavior. Multi-tasking is not as productive as one might think—it just slows you down, and you really don't accomplish as much or do anything thoroughly much less enjoy your tasks. Just do one thing at a time. Go to [Zen Habits](#) to download Leo Babauta's book *Focus* to learn more about the topic.

90. Have Empathy for Others

When we have empathy—the ability to understand and share the feelings of others—we can connect on a more human level. We can understand another person's situation and relate it to our own life. Active empathy is the ability to put ourselves in someone else's shoes, to understand what someone is experiencing, and to reflect back that understanding. Having empathy is one of the best ways to reconnect with others and enrich the relationships we have with our family, friends, and coworkers.

91. List Your Intentions

An intention can set the tone for your day, your year, or a specific event. It can be a road map which helps you find your way. Writing your intentions is similar to writing down your goals. No matter what you call it, writing down what you want sends your request through to the universe. Visualize your intentions, and write them in the present tense. It will be a constant reminder of the changes you want to make. Find out more at [Treatment Talk](#).

92. Develop Your Intuition

Learning more about your intuition will help you reach your highest potential. You will increase your success in life by developing your creative side and your problem-solving skills. Coincidences will increase as you find yourself in the right place at the right time. When you learn to use all the abilities of your mind, you open up all possibilities to create a satisfying, meaningful life. Check out [Powered by Intuition](#) to learn more about accessing your intuition.

93. Work on Getting to Know Yourself

What is your purpose here on earth? Take the time and make the effort to find out who you really are. Read books, take classes, seek therapy or support, or just experience more in life. Do what you need to do, and you'll find that when you peel back the layers that protect your true self from fear, pain, and feeling "less than" or "not good enough," your authentic inner self will blossom and shine. You'll live the life and be the person you were meant to be. Read more here: "[The Greatest Discovery of All: Getting to Know Yourself.](#)"

94. Tell Your Family You Love Them Every Day

Your family can mean your children, your spouse or significant other, your parents, your siblings or relatives, your closest friends, your pets, and even your close business associates, colleagues, or "tribe." Tell them "I Love You." Three powerful words. Need I say more?

95. Meditate

Take some time during the day to sit and notice your breath. It can lead you through to your inner self to find out who you really are. When you make time every day to listen to that small voice within you, the more centered and balanced you become. Want to know more? Here are 14 websites to give you all the information you need to [start your own meditation practice](#).

96. Live in the Present Moment

Think about what you're doing at this very moment. Observe yourself and what's around you. Think like a child who is just learning the wonder of the world or a dog or a cat and how they savor and interact with each moment of the day. Try feeling what is happening as you go through your day. When you shower, feel the water coming down and washing over your body as it cools you down or warms you up. When you're eating, think about nothing else but how the food tastes. Spend more time savoring each moment of the present. Let go of your regrets from the past and your worries about the future.

97. Go on a Retreat

One of the greatest gifts we can give ourselves is a spiritual retreat. Retreats come in many flavors from gender specific to meditation or yoga. A retreat allows you time to get away from your routine, clear your head, and regroup. Life becomes simple when you get away and you have a chance to let go of your regular responsibilities. If you've recently finished treatment, you might feel like you've just been on a retreat, but you may want to attend other kinds of retreats in the future that will also support you and have meaning for you.

98. “Stop and Smell the Roses”

The title of this 1974 song by [Mac Davis](#) is a reminder to slow down. So many of us, caught up in our busy lives, rush from one thing to another and forget to enjoy the pleasures of life. We can become overwhelmed, stressed out, and anxious.

As often as you can, take a moment during the day to appreciate your surroundings and a part of nature. Anything will do—clouds, the sun, potted indoor plants, trees, flowers along a sidewalk, dandelions, a neighbor’s rosebush—if it gives you pleasure and reconnects you to the present moment. You’ll tune in to your inner self and bring your mind back to peace and serenity.

99. Join a Support Group

A support group can be friends and family or it can be a group of strangers who have the same challenges that you have. There is usually one to fit your needs. With a little effort and the desire to seek a support system, a group can offer unlimited value to your life. There are many support groups to choose from. Connecting with others can allow you to let go of the stigma of addiction and feel more confident to continue your life in recovery. Check out [Support Works](#) to read about 7 ways to find a support group near you.

99. Read a Spiritual Book

Let the wisdom of those who have gone before us teach and lead us to the light. Daily readers and other books can bring spiritual comfort, and they can be insightful and enlightening. Four books that I have loved reading are *The Four Agreements* by Don Miguel Ruiz, *The Alchemist* by Paulo Coelho, *Meditations from the Mat* by Rolf Gates and Katrina Kenison, and *Broken Open* by Elizabeth

Lesser. This is just a start, so take some time to browse in a bookstore or library to find a book that is helpful to you. Explore books that bring you comfort, guidance, and inspire you onward.

100. Create a Vision Board

What do you want out of life? Creating a vision board will help you identify your goals or vision and give you clarity. A vision board is made up of pictures of the goals or dreams that a person has for his or her life. It's a tool that will help you clarify, concentrate, and maintain your focus on specific life goals, and it will give those ideas and dreams substance.

Any sort of large piece of paper or poster board will work just fine as a place where you can display images—photos, clippings from magazines or newspapers, postcards, etc.— that represent whatever you want to be, do, or have in your life. When you make a vision board, your goals remain fresh in your mind and reinforce your desire to achieve them.

101. Volunteer

Find a local cause or charity that you believe in and give it your support. With as little as a few hours a month, you'll not only help the charity, but you'll also be helping yourself. You may discover something you're really good at and develop a new skill. You'll come away with a sense of achievement and even some new career options, interests, and hobbies. You'll meet new people and experience new things as you participate in and give to your community and help others.

Go to [Volunteer Match](#) to find a great place to volunteer.

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Closing Note



I hope some of the ideas you've read here will inspire you to find something that moves you forward, not only physically, but also mentally. To replace our addictions, we need positive, self-accepting activities that bring us meaning and joy.

Today, I enjoy yoga, tennis, running, meditation, journaling, blogging, and reading as my main natural highs. These activities keep me focused, remind me to enjoy life, and help me let go of worrying about the addiction in my family.

Find what works for you. The key is to persist, and you may discover that you feel stronger, have more confidence, and are more resilient and creative. Your life will improve considerably when you spend time with activities you truly enjoy.

Doing the work to keep ourselves in long-term recovery is the greatest gift we can give ourselves.

I would love to hear what you've discovered as your natural high. Join in the discussion at [Treatment Talk](#) anytime, and let us know how *your* natural high has affected your life.

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cathy".

Cathy Taughinbaugh

TreatmentTalk.org

Find me on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#)!