



MAKE TIME FOR FUN: Enjoy activities with loved ones

When you think about your treasured relationships, who comes to mind? Friends, family and/or your spouse? Do you instantly think about the joy they bring into your life? Strong, healthy relationships might inspire memories of laughter, support, swapping stories and fun times. Our lives are enriched by these experiences. These relationships also allow for support and encouragement during tough times. They make you feel loved and appreciated. Throughout this document, you will find information on facilitating activities to enhance relationships, both romantic and platonic. Check the red boxes for information to add romance to any fun activity.

With our strongest relations, we often feel comfortable sharing our dreams and goals. These types of relationships inspire growth and confidence. These people want the best for us and act as cheerleaders, celebrating accomplishments. They're the ones who celebrate you and the positive things you do in life. They might also act as accountability partners, reminding you that your goal is important to you when you get off track. Generally, these relationships help us to remain focused on the importance of working toward the future we desire.

It's also these people who often encourage us to try new things. Think about the activities you do that hold the most value in your life. Is it important for you to exercise, attend religious services or remain active in a hobby? How did you start doing these things? Who introduced you to them? People in your life who share similar interests can tell you about upcoming events and invite you to do things. As you welcome more people into your life who have shared interests, you increase your potential for fun.

Below you will find a list of activities that you can do with your loved ones. As you read through the activities, consider who might enjoy doing them with you. Consider reading this document with a close friend, family member or your partner. If you find something that sounds fun, invite others to join you. This will allow you to build memories and share fun times.

When thinking about activities and events, consider people who will maximize the fun. Invite them to plan activities with you. Work with them to plan what you will do, where you will go, transportation and the date and time. Set a budget in advance so that you don't spend more money than you intend. When budgeting, remember to think about meals and transportation. Also remember that lots of places offer discounts during less popular hours and to seniors, students and children.

Tips – Add a little romance

By adding a few thoughtful touches to almost any activity, you can add romance.

Whether you're planning a special occasion, a weekly date night or just thinking about ways to enhance the daily romance in your relationship, start by thinking about what your partner enjoys and how you can bring more of that into their life. What brings a smile to their face? How can you incorporate these things into your daily activities? You don't have to break the bank to be romantic. With a little creativity, you can increase the sentimental value of almost any activity.

Throughout this document you will find ways to add a little romance to everyday fun activities. Look for the red romance tip boxes for ideas.

Enjoy a Performance

Performances can lift your spirits, give you energy and put a smile on your face. While some performances can empty your wallets, most cities also provide free and low cost opportunities to enjoy live music and theater. Many colleges and music schools offer free recitals to give their students experience playing in front of an audience. Libraries and bookstores often host free book and poetry readings. You might also enjoy a live band at your local pub or at a free outdoor summer music festival. These opportunities are

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Tip 1: Plan Ahead

Plan ahead but be flexible on your date. Bring flowers and chocolates, create a music playlist, make reservations and purchase tickets in advance. By having things ready before your date night, you show that you put effort into making the night special.

Also remember that even the best planning doesn't assure that everything will go smoothly. Allow a date to take twists and turns that you didn't expect, keeping in mind what is important - enjoying each other and having fun. Be prepared but also relax and remain as casual and carefree as possible when things don't go as planned.

often listed in local papers and on websites. Many cities' colleges and parks also host free outdoor movies in nice weather.

Go Shopping

Do you enjoy fashion and design? If your idea of a great day involves walking and window shopping, try a day strolling through malls, department stores, shopping plazas, and downtown shopping centers. For deals, try outlet malls, flea markets, yard sales and thrift stores. Take a break during a day of discount shopping for a low-cost lunch from a food court, farmers market or grab a slice of pizza.

Do Something That Matters

Select a cause that is meaningful to your group and spend a few hours volunteering together. If you haven't volunteered, you are in for a shock because in addition to the good feeling you get from helping others, volunteering can be a lot of fun. If you volunteer with a group, you can spend a day sharing stories and laughter. You also get the benefits related to the day's work. If you clean-up a park, you spend the day breathing fresh air and enjoying nature while making your community shine. Reading or playing with kids at a hospital or library allows you to enjoy all the silly joys of childhood while making kids happy. Working with wheelchair sports teams might give you and others needed physical exercise. Consider your interests and needs when deciding which volunteer activities are right for you. Search for volunteer activities at volunteermatch.org and serve.gov.

Tackle a Home Project

Do you have roommates, family members, a partner or people who spend a lot of time at your home? Gather them together to spruce up the atmosphere while having fun. Consider home projects that you are confident you can conquer together. The more adventurous might take on large improvements, the less experienced might opt to paint, hang curtains, move furniture or organize. New colors or furniture placement can have a huge impact while not costing an arm and a leg. Doing projects at home together

can be fun, especially if you remember to take things in stride, laughing at the ridiculousness of difficult projects. For ideas, Home Depot offers classes which are listed on their website. Also, visit flea markets and thrift stores for great deals.

Get in touch with Nature

You can connect with the people you love most or create new connections while getting fresh air and exercise walking along nature trails, waterfronts, botanical gardens or just in your neighborhood park. Seasonal opportunities might allow for anything from playing in the snow to apple picking and collecting wildflowers. Pack a lunch to keep costs low and enhance the outdoor experience. If you don't have a chance to get away for a weekend, consider back-yard camping, barbeques and picnics.

Explore your city

Cities often offer great shopping, restaurants and museums. These are all great things to do with loved ones. To keep costs low, you might visit outlets, clearance sections or thrift stores. Restaurants can be pricey, but if you do a little research in advance (by checking on-line menus or visiting yelp.com), you can find low-cost, high-quality cuisine in most cities. Visit museumfreedays.com and free-attractions.com to find free ways that you and your party can enjoy a low cost adventure.

There are also non-traditional ways to explore your city. Consider seeing a side of your city through touring an old factory. Factorytours.com offers listings of factories from breweries to cookie baking shops which

might be creative fun activities. If you're excited by the thought of moving around from place to place, participate in a scavenger hunt or create your own with a list of various things to see in a day.

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Tip 3: Put It In Writing

Write real letters. Print real pictures.

Technology makes everything easier, but does it make it more romantic? For many people, nothing beats being handed a sentimental thought. These things show that you put time and effort into your display of appreciation. Letters and pictures can be held, displayed and kept in a special place. They can serve as visual reminders of how much you care.

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Tip 2: Dress Up

Show your special someone that this day is important by dressing nicely. Wear something that is appropriate for the activity but also shows that you put some thought into your style. Does your partner have a favorite color? Has s/he complimented you when you wore a certain sweater? Let them know you notice these things when you select your clothing.

Your activity doesn't have to be over-the-top or fancy for you to dress well. You can make a night out of eating spaghetti-o's at home on the couch if you wear nice clothes, put on soft music and light candles.

Get Moving

When we have people in our lives who encourage us to be physically active, we are more likely to get moving. There is no end to the fun things you can do that are good for your physical fitness. Do you know people who have similar fitness goals? Work together to encourage and inspire each other. Remember to make it fun. Exercise doesn't have to be dull and repetitive. Try new things. Consider swimming, biking, dancing, Frisbee, walking through parks, and roller skating. How fun is that? Add music to walks and gym

time. Get in touch with your competitive side with sports or find calm in yoga. There are endless ways to get moving. Think about what interests you, talk to friends and go have fun!

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Tip 4: Focus on Appreciation

Flirt. It's important to remain focused things you appreciate in your mate as you grow comfortable. Take moments to observe what first attracted you. Do you like how s/he walks, talks, or laughs? Remind your loved one what you appreciate about him/her. Decide to be generous with compliments, smiles, hugs and winks.

learn something new, share what you've learned. Dazzle kids with magic tricks, teach the family a new card game, or make a new recipe with your partner. The website, familyeducation.com offers lists of fun and educational, interactive activities for babies, kids and teens. Sporcle.com offers lots of trivia and mentally stimulating diversions that can be done alone or with a group.

Learn Together

Do you love to learn? Would you like to learn a new language or a new skill, like knitting or woodworking? Do you know anyone who might want to take a class with you? The internet is full of exciting things you can try. And, after you

Play Together

Instead of watching television or playing games on your phones, organize a board game or card game night. These activities allow for lots of chatting and laughter. Consider games that are appropriate for all ages involved or pair-up more experienced players with less experienced players so that everyone has a chance to win. Or, plan a game night and invite participants to each select one or more games. Let each person teach the rules to their game. For card games ideas and rules, visit pagat.com.

Celebrate

Celebrate your culture or get a taste of others with festivals such as Cinco de Mayo, Chinese New Year and Mardi Gras. For a calendar of holidays and celebrations around the world, visit earthcalendar.net. Or, spend time wandering around craft fairs, art and/or music festivals. Many cities offer plenty of opportunities, especially during the winter holidays and the warm weather seasons. Events are often free to attend but budget for purchases, including food and drink. Find local events at a Visitors Center or check newspapers and local websites that advertise events.

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Tip 5: It's the thoughtfulness that counts

You might notice a theme in these tips, thoughtfulness. That's where true romance lies. It's not about spending money or being perfect. It is about enjoying time together and creating opportunities to let your partner know how special they are to you.