

100 Things to do on a Money Free Weekend

About a year ago, I offered up the idea of the [money-free weekend](#): if this link doesn't work, click on or cut and paste the following website into your browser. These are written by Trent.

<http://www.thesimpledollar.com/2007/04/16/challenge-yourself-to-a-money-free-weekend/>

For the last few months, my wife and I have been doing something every other weekend or so that we call a “money free” weekend, in an effort to live more frugally. It's actually quite fun – here's how we do it.

We are not allowed to spend any money on anything, no matter what. In other words, we can't make a run to the store to buy food, we can't spend money on any sort of entertainment, and so on. Since we often do our grocery shopping on Saturdays, on a “money free” weekend, we delay it to Monday or Tuesday.

We can use our utilities, but no extra expenses on these utilities. No renting movies on cable, no text messages that aren't already covered by our cell phone plan, and so on.

I followed this up with [fifteen things to do during such a weekend](#), [fifteen more things to do](#), and [fifteen deeply fulfilling things to do](#) during such a weekend.

Since then, lots of people have sent me ideas for activities for money-free weekends, plus we've uncovered a bunch of our own. At the same time, many readers have asked for a master list of all of these ideas.

So, here we go – one hundred fun ways to spend a money free weekend. The list below includes the first forty-five (with duplicates removed), plus about sixty new ones. Print this off and use it as a checklist or a thumbnail guide for your own money-free weekend. Please note that **everyone's interests are different** – you probably won't find everything on this list fun and neither will someone else, but the two lists won't overlap (I can think of countless things other people find fun that I find utterly dreadful). Anyway, here goes!

- 1. Check out the community calendar.** Look at your town's website (as well as those of cities and towns nearby) or stop by city hall to find a list of events going on in the community, many of which are free. You'll often be surprised at how many interesting (and free) activities are going on *right now* in your area.
- 2. Visit your community library.** Not only is a library a warehouse of books, most libraries also have extensive CD and DVD collections you can check out. Many libraries also have “story time” for young children, film nights, book clubs, and many other events that you may be unaware of – completely for free. Stop in and check out what they have to offer.
- 3. Get involved in community sports.** Many towns have community sports fields where both youth and adult sports leagues and activities are regularly going on throughout the weekend. Stop by, watch a game or two, and if something intrigues you, look into joining either as a participant or as a volunteer.
- 4. Get your financial papers in order.** This may not sound like a fun activity up front, but the peace of mind it gives you will make your life a lot more relaxing. Spend an hour or two organizing all of your statements and other financial documents. This is a perfect time to [start your own filing system](#). If you're more adventurous, try [initiating an electronic filing system](#), as it will save you significant space and make information retrieval easier (though it's more of a time investment up front).
- 5. Check out some podcasts.** Podcasts are wonderful things – top-notch audio programs available for you to listen to for free. Give some a sample – you can do it easily by using iTunes. Visit the Podcast section of the

store and check a few out. My favorites include [The Splendid Table](#) (on food topics), [Marketplace](#) (on economics and business), [Speaking of Faith](#) (on religion), [Fresh Air](#) (interviews of general interest), [This American Life](#) (quirky general interest stuff), and [This Week in Tech](#) (technology news), among many others.

6. Play board games. We have a pile of board games, mostly received as gifts, that we often pull out and play, plus our closest friend has a few choice ones. Classic games like [Monopoly](#) and [Pictionary](#) can be great fun, but our favorites are [Settlers of Catan](#), [Cartagena](#), [Puerto Rico](#), and especially [Ticket to Ride](#). Just dig through the recesses of your closet, find an old board game you haven't played in ages, and bust it open!

7. Bake a loaf of homemade bread. You probably have everything you need to [make a loaf of bread](#) in your kitchen right now (except for maybe the yeast). Anyone can do it, and the bread turns out deliciously. Here's [a detailed visual guide](#) for making a simple loaf with minimal ingredients and complexity.



8. Learn how to juggle. All you really need is three balls and [a video showing you how to do it](#). Not only is it a fun activity to learn, it's something that's fun to bust out as a party trick on occasion (trust me, you can always get people to smile if you juggle three fruits in the kitchen while preparing something).

9. Teach yourself how to change the oil in your car. If you're due for an oil change, just bring the oil you need home with you and teach yourself how to do it. All you really need is an old pan to catch the wasted oil and a funnel to pour the old oil back into the canisters for later disposal. Just use your car manual as a guide for the procedure and you might just find that not only is it a lot easier than you thought, but it's a useful skill to have *and* it's cheaper than taking your car into Jiffy-Lube (or wherever you take your car for oil changes).

10. Meet your neighbors. Make an effort to introduce yourself to your neighbors if you don't know them well. Invite any interesting ones over for a cup of coffee and a chat, just to get to know each other better. Your neighbors can not only become friends, but can also be a valuable resource – a friendly pair of eyes on your property when you're away or a helpful set of hands when you're trying to complete a challenging task.

11. Have a “cupboard potluck.” Go through your cupboards and find any items that might have slipped to the back over time. Invite some friends to do the same, then get together for a potluck dinner prepared from only these ingredients and whatever else you have on hand. It makes for a “free” meal and a lot of fun for everyone involved.

12. Clear out your media collection – books, DVDs, CDs, etc. Just go through what you've got, determine which ones you'd actually like to keep, and get rid of the rest. You can either sell them at a used media shop or swap them online using services like [PaperBackSwap](#), [SwapTree](#), and [SwapADVD](#). In either case, you'll get rid of stuff you don't watch or read or listen to any more in exchange for either some money or new media to enjoy.

13. Make a [101 Goals in 1001 Days](#) list – then start on some of them. A [101 Goals in 1001 Days](#) list is a very effective way to codify all of the ideas of things you'd like to do all into one place, so that when you have spare time, you can just turn to the list and do what's next on it. Spend some time thinking of things that belong on

this list, then when it's finished, you'll have an excellent list of potential accomplishments and be ready to go with lots of activities.

14. Make decisions about and write out your will. This is a thought process that many people put off, but it makes you feel quite relieved when it's done, adding to your peace of mind and relaxation. Spend some time thinking about what you want to happen to your personal assets when you die, particularly in terms of the personal mementos that you want others to have and where you want the value of your estate to go. Do you want it all to stay with family members? Do you want to remember a charity? Then, when you've figured it out, sketch out the basics of a will. Later, you'll likely have to have a lawyer prepare it for you, but just having the decisions made doesn't cost a thing and is a big mental relief.

15. Do a household maintenance walkthrough. Just go through your home and look for any little maintenance tasks that need to be done. Do filters need to be replaced? Are there any burnt-out light bulbs? Here's a [maintenance checklist](#) that might give you some ideas as to what to look for. It might not be the most fun activity you can think of, but it'll add subtly to your enjoyment of your home when it's done – cleaner air, light bulbs in place, and so on.

16. Organize a walking tour. Find out about the interesting historical and cultural sites in your town, then go on a walking tour of it. Pack a lunch in your backpack and have a picnic on the village green or in the park. You can easily turn this into a full day if you live in a compelling area.

17. Teach yourself how to knit. Knitting requires two needles (a dollar, or probably free if your closet looks anything like ours), some yarn (extremely cheap and also likely laying in the closet if your home is like ours), a lot of patience, and an [instructional video](#) or [two](#). Try making a scarf or two for your friends or a small blanket for a new baby in the home of a friend or a family member. While it's not quite free, if you stick with it, you'll make things much more valuable than the input cost of a bit of yarn, plus you may learn a compelling new skill.

18. Take some digital photographs. Take your digital camera out with you and take pictures of anything you find interesting. Take lots of them, then go home later and see if you've taken anything beautiful and compelling. Great images can make for the basics of homemade greeting cards (yep, keep going downwards for more on this), nice desktop wallpaper, screensavers, or many other interesting uses.

19. Share those digital photographs with others. Sign up for a free [Flickr](#) account, then upload some of your most interesting pictures to share with others. Spend the time to title them appropriately, add interesting captions, and [allow them to be used under a Creative Commons Attribution license](#) so your images can be enjoyed by as many people as possible.

20. Start a blog on a topic that interests you. You can get a free blog at [Wordpress](#) or [Blogger](#). Join the service and start a blog on a topic that interests you. Not only can it be a ton of fun, it also helps you improve your communication skills, reach out to others, and perhaps earn a bit of income as well.

21. Organize a potluck block party. Get permission from the city to do this before you try it – ask if you can block off a street for a block party on a certain date. Then throw yourself into organizing it. Go door to door, telling people about the block party, and inviting them to bring something. Ask if they have tables and/or chairs that can be used for it. Then, on the day of the party, set out the tables and chairs you borrowed and dig in. Since you're the host, just contribute one of the “cupboard potluck” dishes you made from idea #11.



22. Visit a free museum or a zoo (or find out when you might be able to get in for free). Many cities have free educational attractions, such as zoos or museums. Make an effort to enjoy these free attractions. If your community doesn't have free zoos or museums, call them and ask about opportunities for "free to the public" exhibits or "free days" or even free passes upon request. Quite often, you'll find that there are many opportunities to enjoy museums, zoos, science centers, and the like without any cost at all.

23. Learn the basics of a new topic. Just go to [MIT's OpenCourseWare](#), find a topic you're interested in, download a bunch of mp3s of lectures on the topic, and listen to them while you're doing household chores. Some great suggested starting points: [microeconomics](#), [macroeconomics](#), [basics of philosophy](#), [western philosophy](#), and [introductory physics](#). Another great option: fire up iTunes, then click on the "iTunes U" option on the left hand side. You'll find *tons* of material there to teach you the basics of countless topics.

24. Cook some meals in advance. If you already have a bunch of basic food staples on hand, spend some time cooking some meals in advance to store in the freezer. It's easy to prepare casseroles, soups, pasta meals, and many other items all at once, then store them in portion-sized containers in the freezer for eating later. Not only is this way cheaper than eating out or buying convenience foods, it's also healthier and also far more social. Missing some ingredients but have an abundance of others? Team up with friends and make it a social event – share ingredients so that you can all take some casseroles or other dishes home for the freezer.

25. Build a basic net worth calculator for yourself. One great way to ensure that you're consistently making financial progress is to [build your own net worth calculator](#). Once you have it set up, updating it is easy, and it can provide a great snapshot of your financial situation as well as show off your progress. Here's [a detailed guide to making one](#) with any basic spreadsheet program.

26. Have a quilting bee. All you need is a bunch of spare cloth (old shirts will even work, as will old curtains, old sheets, and so forth), some needles (in a lot of closets), some thread, some scissors, and some friends. Just get together, cut out squares of interesting cloth, and start sewing. You can stuff the inside with soft excess cloth, like tee shirts and such, instead of buying batting, and you'll create a warm and interesting quilt over time.

27. Try out some great open source and free software. Ever wanted Microsoft Office but didn't want to foot the bill? Spend some time downloading and setting up [OpenOffice](#). Want a good scheduling program? Try out [Sunbird](#) (a program I [really like](#)). Want to design a nifty newsletter or lay out some pages? Try out [Scribus](#) (which I'm actually currently using for a future Simple Dollar-related project). Your computer can do so much more – and it's free!

28. Practice origami. All you need is some scrap paper and a bit of time. The simple things, like [cranes](#) and [frogs](#), then you can try harder stuff like an [origami iris](#). A well-made origami piece constructed from interesting paper can be a beautiful decoration.

29. Make a how-to video for YouTube. Share your knowledge! All you need is a digital camera that captures video and (optionally) some video editing software. Just create a video to demonstrate how to accomplish something interesting and useful. Start off by making a script to follow, then turn on the camera and follow it. When you're done, upload it to YouTube and let others enjoy it. If it's useful and entertaining, people will come.

30. Do a "bill reduction." Spend a few hours trimming your monthly bills. Find [ways to reduce your regular bills](#). Ask for [credit card rate reductions](#). Think about what monthly bills you can completely eliminate, then do the footwork to get rid of them. This might be a boring task now, but if you can trim \$50 from your monthly bills for free, your future self will be very happy.

31. Play football / soccer. All you need is a ball, some open space, and some friends. Designate whatever is available as goals, then kick the ball around. Don't worry about being terrible at the game – as long as everyone's just having fun, it really doesn't matter how bad you are. Trust me – I've played football with Europeans who spent their entire life playing while I'd played perhaps an hour of serious football in my life, yet I had a lot of fun (albeit with a lot of falling down and jumping out of the way).

32. Scan your old pictures. If you have a digital scanner laying around somewhere, bust it out and scan in the piles of old prints you have laying around. If you have [a screensaver of pictures](#), scanning in old prints and adding them to the rotation will make your screensaver all the more amazing. Plus, it becomes easy to just attach them to emails and send them to friends and family.

33. Have a film festival. Invite some friends over and have them each bring one of their favorite DVDs. Then just settle in with some snacks (whatever you have on hand) and burn a lazy afternoon and evening just watching movies together. It's a ton of fun and it doesn't cost anything at all.

34. Seduce your partner. Really, is there any way to really have more fun than that for free? It's fun, romantic, great exercise, and can really help heal any relationship problems you might be having. An afternoon in your partner's arms will make both of you feel better, and it won't cost a penny.

35. Do some networking. Spend an afternoon writing emails to professional contacts, just to see what they're up to and letting them know what you're up to, setting them up to send en masse on Monday morning. While it might be boring for some, it can open countless doors for your career if you do it consistently, help you build new relationships and friendships, and all it takes is a little bit of spare time.

36. Practice yoga – or try it for the first time. All you need is some floor space and a blanket to do most yoga poses. Try out [a basic yoga session](#) to see if you like it. It increases flexibility, improves concentration, and holding some of those positions for long periods can be a powerful workout.

37. Cut your own hair. I have a pair of hair clippers in the bathroom and every once in a while, I take them out and just whack away at my hair. Not only is it a free way to get your long hair cut, it can also make you look a lot more presentable, plus the act of cutting your own hair is a really powerful experience.

38. Do a neighborhood cleanup. No need to organize a formal activity. Just walk through the shared spaces in your neighborhood (parks, sidewalks, etc.) with a trash bag and pick up the trash. Not only is it a pleasant way to get your blood rushing, it also beautifies the area around you, not just for your enjoyment, but for the enjoyment of everyone. If you want to really get into it, invite people that live near you to get involved as well and make it an event.

39. Build some paper airplanes. Design and build a bunch of different paper airplanes, then have a competition in the back yard to see which one flies the best. This is a great way to use up some scrap paper,

particularly old newspapers. You can easily turn it into a contest – the winner gets to pick what activity to engage in next, or gets to choose what you're having for supper.

40. Rearrange the furniture in a room. It's amazing how much a room can be refreshed just by moving the furniture around to a new position. Try moving the couch to a different wall, then moving the entertainment center elsewhere. Take your bed and turn it ninety degrees, then moving the dressers to match the new configuration. It'll refresh the look of the room and give you a good workout to boot.

41. Read an entertaining book. Look around your house for a fun book to read, perhaps something loaned to you by a friend or something you received as a gift, and curl up and let yourself be sucked into the story. I'm a sucker for Stephen King novels – I can just pick up any one and quickly be sucked straight into the plot for a fun afternoon's read.

42. Build a giant blanket fort. If you have kids, there are few things more fun than an afternoon spent building and playing in a gigantic fort in the living room. Use chairs, blankets, and tables to make an enormous hidden structure, then hide in there and play games and read books. If they're a bit older, build two forts (on opposite sides of the room) and have "fort wars" – toss small beanbags and pillows back and forth. No cost, but an afternoon that's a ton of fun.

43. Call a family member or a friend you haven't spoken to in a while. Not only does it provide you a chance to catch up and firm up a relationship with another person who is important to you, it can also be a very entertaining and enjoyable way to spend an hour or two.

44. Start a [natural collection](#) or an observation notebook. In other words, spend some time in nature collecting items of interest (like particular rocks) or observations of things. Perhaps you'll want to look for birds, or maybe your passion is rocks or feathers. Whatever it is, get your hiking boots on, get out there, and see what you can find. Here's some [advice on how to get started](#).

45. Start a compost bin. All you need is a barrel or a large bucket (or, if you live in the country, some open space). In that bucket, just keep vegetable waste, coffee grounds, and eggshells. On occasion, scoop in a bit of dirt from the ground. Move the contents around regularly and keep it a bit moist. Over time, the compost will turn almost black. At that point, you can let it dry out and have perfectly natural fertilizer for your lawn or garden.

46. Have a yard sale. A yard sale is a very lucrative way to spend a money-free weekend. Not only does it provide you an excuse for cleaning out unwanted stuff from your home, it can also bring in a nice little wad of money as well, plus give you a weekend's worth of entertainment and activity. This is really a great way to spend a money-free weekend.

47. Learn a foreign language. Doubt this can be free? There are a lot of ways to learn a foreign language online, from podcasts that teach language skills to YouTube videos and [many other free language learning opportunities](#). Search around for resources for any language that you might want to learn – you'll find tons of materials to help you.

48. Deep-clean the room in your house you spend the most time in. One great afternoon project that will provide aesthetic value for years is deep cleaning a single room in your house, ideally the room you're in most often. Getting that room pristine will subtly add to your enjoyment of that room for quite a while. This means going the full nine yards – moving everything out, scrubbing the walls, thoroughly cleaning the floor, cleaning all of the items in it, and so forth. When you're done, the room will feel fresh and new in a very subtle way.

49. Make some homemade greeting/birthday/Christmas cards. All you really need for this is some card stock or some cheap blank cards from your local dollar store, plus some photographs (or a desktop printer). You

might also want to have some other creative printed materials on hand – I like to keep old *New Yorker* covers for purposes like these. Just use pictures and other elements to create unique greeting and holiday cards, then save them for the appropriate occasion. Here are [some tips on what to write on the inside](#).

50. Take a nap. Seriously. Most people do not get adequate sleep during the week. Why not just kick back and take a snooze for an hour or two. It's the ultimate free energy refreshing technique.

51. Get things done. Almost everyone has a long list of things to do “when they have time.” Use the fact that you're intentionally spending a money-free weekend to in fact get some of those things done. Clean up the house. Dust the front room. Fix that old toaster. Go through the stuff on the garage loft. At the end of the weekend, you'll have accomplished something useful, plus your wallet will be fully intact.

52. Dig up your family tree. Take a peek at [genealogy.com](#) and see what you can find out about your ancestors. Try to assemble a family tree, and see if you can link to any distant cousins or long-lost family members. Doing this can give you a much clearer picture of your heritage and help you get in touch with your family roots.

53. Sit down with your partner for an afternoon and talk about your goals. Spending some time with your partner discussing goals can go a long way towards getting you both on the same page in your relationship. Find out what your partner wants out of life and what you can do to support it, then share your own desires. Find areas where you're working in concert towards something bigger. Doing this can only lead to more clarity in your relationship. Here are some [tips for getting started](#).

54. Play Calvinball. You need a ball (or a few balls) and some number of children and some open space. Just kick the ball around (or throw it) and make up rules as you go along. With three or more kids, a game of Calvinball can go on for a good hour with everyone having a good time.

55. Do some puzzles. I enjoy doing both [sudoku puzzles](#) and [crossword puzzles](#). You can find a huge number of these puzzles online for free. They're a great way to stretch your mind a bit at the kitchen table for a half an hour or so, solving a problem with just your intellect.

56. Volunteer your time. There are countless volunteer projects out there that need nothing more than your time. A Saturday spent working for a volunteer cause is a Saturday well spent – it gives you a full day spent making a positive contribution to society, working your body and your mind for the benefit of others, and leaving you at the end of the day knowing you used your gifts to provide for others.

57. Turn on the water sprinkler. This is another great one for family fun with kids. Just run out a hose in the backyard, attach a sprinkler to the end, and turn it on, jetting the water up in the air. Then run around in the water. Lots of fun for the kids – and it can be a ton of fun for the parents, too, if they run through the sprinklers.



58. Try a basic meditation technique. Meditation is a spectacular way to push stress out of your life and calm yourself. Knowing how to meditate effectively and doing it regularly can

be a major part of your stress management, and it costs nothing. Here's a [wonderful basic meditation technique](#) to get you started – there are countless others out there. Try a few and see which ones work well for you.

59. Get involved in an open source programming project. If you're a computer programmer, there are few more intellectually stimulating ways to get involved in your passion than to be involved in an open source programming project. One role that almost every project can use is a person that is willing to fix mundane and boring bugs – finding that one line of code that's causing a minor issue and fixing it. Look for a project that's compelling for you and dig in.

60. Teach yourself a card trick. There are many card tricks out there that rely on knowing a specific pattern, some basic sleight of hand, or some combination of the two. Learning a clever one and mastering how it's done can be a great way to spend an afternoon, especially since the skill can be used again and again as a party trick. Here's a [great one to learn](#) – it's really clever and can utterly baffle people.

61. Attend a religious service. Even if you're not a believer, attending a religious service can be a worthwhile educational experience. I really enjoy attending services of different faiths, as the varieties of religious experience are quite fascinating and incredibly insightful. Plus, most religious services – if you pay careful attention – offer a ton of intellectual food for thought no matter what your beliefs are. A religious service is always a worthwhile experience.

62. Start a workout routine. Most basic exercises – push-ups, sit-ups, jogging, and so forth – require no extra equipment at all. Spend some time doing research into fitness and figuring out a basic workout routine that will work for you, then do the basic “stress tests” you'll need to do to figure out where you're at. For example, the [one hundred pushups](#) routine is very useful, but you need to couple it with other exercises, such as leg lifts, prone lifts, and jogging. You can also try out the [lifetime fitness ladder](#) for a more diverse workout routine.

63. Read a “great” book. By this, I mean a book that genuinely challenges both your beliefs and ideas as well as your language skills. Reading a great book is always a good mental workout. I recommend trying out any of the [Pulitzer Prize winning novels](#) or any essential work of philosophy to get started. Try hitting the library and checking out *A History of Western Philosophy* by Bertrand Russell, *The Executioner's Song* by Norman Mailer, *Sophie's Choice* by William Styron, or *Invisible Man* by Ralph Ellison – all of which deeply challenged and moved me. These books are deep, challenging reading – read them slowly and you'll grow as a person.

64. Go swimming. Almost every town has a community swimming pool or some sort of area where the public can swim – lacking that, go to a state park with a public swimming area. Swimming is wonderfully invigorating and often makes me feel very peaceful – best of all, it's something you can do for free.

65. Get involved with public access television. If you've ever wondered what goes into the process of producing a television show, most communities offer the resources for you to do just that. Stop by your local public access station and see what opportunities are available there. You can usually get involved for free in an ongoing program as an extra hand and learn a great deal about the whole process.

66. Blow bubbles. Just mix one part liquid dish detergent with 15 parts water – one quick way to do this is to just mix 1/4 cup detergent with 3 3/4 cups of water. Use filtered and fairly soft water if you can. Then, take a wire coat hanger, bend and twist it into a small loop or two, and you're ready to go. Another idea – take tin cans or coffee cans, remove the top and bottom, and hammer down any sharp metal edges, then dip the end in the solution and wave it in the air. Blowing bubbles works even better if you have small children who love to chase them or are just learning to blow them.

67. Start a journal. A journal can be a powerful way to recall the events that happened in your life previously. Getting in the habit of writing the events of the day down at the end of each day is a great way to remember the specifics, plus writing entries on what you're thinking about now can be the basis of powerful memories and

reflections in the future. Plus, it can often be a release from the tensions of the day. All of that for just a pen and an old notebook – a great free way to spend some time.

68. Write a letter to your future children or grandchildren. All of us have some advice or some stories inside of us that we want to someday share with our children, grandchildren, or other loved ones. Take some time to write these things down with the intent of giving them to that person some day. In the event that you pass on, you can be sure that they'll still receive the things you want to tell them. This can be a very powerful way to consider your feelings and memories as you format them in a way that they can be shared with the ones you care about the most.

69. Make Christmas gifts in advance. If you know already that some people will be on your Christmas list, why not spend some time now making them interesting gifts and saving yourself some money over the long haul? Make them some homemade soap, some homemade hot chocolate mix, and maybe a bottle of homemade beer as a gift. Prepare all of these items, then go ahead and box and wrap them, since they'll stay good for months. Not only is the gift less expensive than what you'd spend at your local department store, it's also more thoughtful, and it'll save you time during the harried Christmas season.

70. Go “coupon scavenging.” If you get the Sunday paper, scavenge the coupons out of it, see if there are any for products you normally buy, and chuck the rest. If you find several coupons, then it might be worthwhile to scavenge. Stop by any friends or neighbors who also get the paper and ask if you can have their flyers when they're done with them, then clean out the coupons in those, too. For example, if you buy V8 Fusion as the default fruit juice for your kids (it's far healthier than almost anything else like it you could give them) and you spy a \$1 off coupon for a bottle, every coupon you scavenge is like finding a dollar bill, and it costs you nothing.

71. Pick up a musical instrument and learn it. Yes, you *can* find an instrument for free and learn how to play it for free as well. Just hit Craigslist and Freecycle looking for freebies, then utilize YouTube and other resources for tutorials. Here's a [detailed guide to learning an instrument for free](#). With a bit of diligence and effort, you can go from nothing at all to being able to play an interesting song on your own instrument for no cost.

72. Plan next year's summer vacation. Figure out what you want to do in general, then use the internet to find specifics on the area. Do some detailed comparison shopping for travel and even set up alerts for cheap tickets. Gather up all of this research, then have a family meeting about the trip. Not only will this save you a ton of money, it can actually be a lot of fun researching a potential trip and thinking of the enjoyment you might get from it.

73. Hone all of your kitchen knives. I actually consider this to be a lot of fun, so I do it on a very regular basis. If you don't, it's an even better idea because your knife blades are likely in very bad shape. All you need is a honing steel – a long piece of somewhat rough steel in the shape of a rod with a handle on the end that probably came with your knife set. Just draw your knife blades along this a few times [as shown in this YouTube video](#). Before you know it, you'll have much more useful knives for your next kitchen experiment.

74. Pick up (and read) a copy of the town's free newspaper. Many cities have a free newspaper that you can snag at the grocery store – some cities have quite a few of them. [I love them](#) – they're free reading that keeps me informed about the local area and also lets me know about free upcoming events. Around here, we have several free newspaper options – *Toons* and *Cityview* are both well worth reading. Try looking in the front lobby of your local library for your free newspaper, or in the front of your local grocery store.

75. Play with a pet – even one not your own. An hour spent scratching a dog's belly and playing fetch or frisbee with it is an hour well spent, as can be some time spent curled up petting a cat. Spend some quality time

with your pet or with the pet of a neighbor or a friend – every pet loves attention and a bit of exercise and interaction.

76. Go on a wandering walk. Just head out your front door and go in whichever direction looks the most interesting. As long as you have some basic navigational skills, you won't get lost, and you can turn around or backtrack whenever you get bored or hit a dead end. Along the way, who knows what kind of interesting stuff you might find?

77. Hold a baby. To me, there are few things more enjoyable than holding a very young baby. They smell wonderful, are usually warm and soft, and often drift right off to sleep in your arms. I don't even mind the crying ones, as some whispering in their ear can usually calm them down. There's nothing better than sitting all relaxed in a chair with a soft, sweet-smelling newborn in your arms.

78. Exchange massages with your partner. A great massage is incredibly relaxing and enjoyable, but they can also be really expensive. Instead of shelling out the cash, just stay at home and exchange massages for free with your partner. Agree to spend fifteen minutes or a half an hour massaging each other deeply and you'll find that you're both quite relaxed and happy – and perhaps ready to try other free and fun activities.

79. Help out an elderly or disabled friend or neighbor. There's always a person or two in your life that could use a helping hand, but often are too proud to ask. One great way to bridge this gap is to just stop in and visit and pay attention – if they need something, you'll usually find out. Then just volunteer to do it and get started on the task. Quite often, you'll find that it's the simple things that really help – reaching something on a high shelf or managing a simple household task. And that little effort can make all the difference. Few things can make you feel more fulfilled than helping someone you care about in their moment of need.

80. Start a book club – or find one to join. If you like reading and know other friends that enjoy it, too, consider starting a book club with them where you all read the same book for a week then meet to talk about it. It can transform reading from a solitary activity into a more socially oriented one, and with a library at your disposal, it can be a free activity as well.

81. Play a card game. A deck of cards and a few friends is all you need for a fun afternoon. Games like [bridge](#), canasta, pinochle, pitch, euchre, hearts, spades, and 500 are not only intellectually challenging, but are intensely social activities as well, drawing you out to interact with others around you. This is a perfect activity for an afternoon with friends and relatives and it costs basically nothing at all.

82. Have an “entertainment swap” with a friend. This one's pretty easy. Just have a friend bring over a pile of their own DVDs, CDs, books, video games, etc. that they own that they think you'd like. When they get there, have a big temporary swap – swap them an item for an item. This not only will refresh your media collection for a while, but can provide a great opportunity for you to talk about your interests with a friend.

83. Take a child to a playground – and actually *play* with the child. Take your own child, or a child of a family member or a friend, to the local park, but instead of just watching the child play, dive in and participate, too. Go down the slide. Swing in the swings. Climb across the monkey bars. Not only will the child adore you for it, you'll find that playing like that is simply *exhilarating* – a little taste of childhood all over again.

84. Explore a blog you like. If you're reading this, you're probably at least a casual reader of at least one blog. What you might have forgotten, though, is that most worthwhile blogs have *tons* of useful and entertaining stuff in their archives. Dig deep in the archives of one of your favorite blogs. You can start with The Simple Dollar by visiting the [chronology](#) – a listing of all of the articles ever posted here in chronological order – and clicking through to the ones you find interesting. Most popular blogs have a similar feature.



85. Work for a political campaign. Really involved in politics? There are a lot of ways you can work for a campaign from your own home whenever you have the spare time (like during a money free weekend). One great way to do it is to get involved with a phone bank – basically, you call up people to provide information about your candidate of choice. You can do this using the free weekend minutes on your cell phone or by using software provided by the campaign. Just contact the campaign you’re interested in helping.

86. Clean out a closet. We’ve all got spaces in our living areas that accumulate junk, and it’s often a small psychological burden – we dread going in there and digging for something we need. Well, get rid of that burden – clean out a closet in your home. Find out all the stuff that’s in there and get rid of the unimportant items. Not only might you find some interesting things, you’ll feel a lot better about your organization when you’re done.

87. Play Frisbee at the park. Just get a friend (or a pet) and dig that old frisbee out of your closet, then head out to an open field and toss it around. It’s a lot of fun, a great excuse to run around and stretch and jump, and it doesn’t cost a dime.

88. Take a long, soaking bath. Just fill up a tub with warm water, strip down, get in, and relax. I like to do this with a bottle of wine, and I’ve even read a book while doing it. Just stretch out and soak for a while and your stress will melt away – it feels fantastic!

89. Play [Desktop Tower Defense](#) ... or some other great free online game. There are tons of deeply engrossing and completely free games to play online – [Desktop Tower Defense](#) just happens to be one of my favorites. Try [Peggle](#) for a very simple action puzzle game, or any of the mountains of free games available at [Yahoo! Games](#), [Kongregate](#), and [PopCap](#).

90. Visit a magazine room. Most libraries have a “magazine room” where you can read all of the latest issues of many popular newspapers and magazines for free. Just grab a few, settle in a comfy chair, and read. Don’t like the library environment? You can usually do the same thing at most bookstores.

91. Attend a dress rehearsal. Many performance groups have dress rehearsals that are open to the public if you call in advance, particularly if you have young children. Give the theater a ring and ask if there are open dress rehearsals for a particular show and then enjoy the show for free! It’s a great way to give your kids a taste of theater without any cost.

92. Attend a free community class. Many institutions and stores offer free classes on the weekends on all sorts of topics. Stop by a local food store and catch a free cooking class, or a hardware store to learn about a home repair topic. Got kids? Try something like the [Home Depot Kids Workshop](#), where they offer free how-to clinics for kids ages five to twelve – these can be a lot of fun (I’ve seen them ongoing when stopping by a Home Depot on a Saturday morning).

93. Donate some unwanted things to charity. If you’ve gone through your stuff but don’t want to have a yard sale, consider giving the stuff to charity. Not only will you have a clean house, you’ll have the good feeling of

knowing your items are going to be used by someone who actually needs them, plus you'll have a pile of receipts to use for tax deductions next April.

94. Discover new music that you like. Download last.fm. It's a program that allows you to enter the name of your favorite musical artist and generates a radio station for you that plays songs similar to that artist. The songs are selected based on the enormous last.fm database, which collects information on what people listen to in iTunes and sorts it in different ways, finding songs by other artists that are popular among fans of a particular group. Give it a whirl – you'll be surprised at the good music you'll find for free.

95. Build a cardboard castle. This is a great one if you have kids. Stop by an appliance store and ask if they have any extra appliance boxes you can get, then flatten them and load up your vehicle. Get home, then use them as pieces in building a giant cardboard castle in your living room or in your back yard. Cut out doors and windows, and attach them together to make rooms. This can be a great afternoon of fun for free!

96. Dig an old video game console out of the closet and play some of your favorites. A lot of families have old video game consoles in the closet – an ancient PlayStation or Super Nintendo, long forgotten about, with a controller and a few games. Dig out that old console and hook it up to a television, then relive some of the memories of the games you used to play for hours. I did this not too long ago and found myself replaying a good chunk of *Final Fantasy IX*.

97. Do some amateur stargazing. Go outside on a clear evening, preferably away from city lights, and look up at the sky. Use some [handy star maps](#) to know what you're looking at. Spread out some blankets on the ground, lay flat on your back, stare upwards, and realize how magnificent the universe is around you.

98. Go on a hike or a long walk. Go to the local hiking or walking trails and just take off. Let yourself get absorbed into nature and simply enjoy the journey. Go at your own speed – this is for your own personal enjoyment, after all.

99. Take a stab at writing poetry (or other forms of creative writing). The basics of poetry are easier than you might think – just try writing down what's on your mind. Whatever you're thinking about, just write it down. That can provide the basics of any poem. Then, just read through the stuff you've written down, choose the words that seem beautiful to you, and assemble them until the whole work means something. This can be a deeply enlightening and personal experience, actually, and one that really stirs the creative juices.

100. Go on a bike ride. If you've got a bicycle and a helmet in your garage or closet, you already have everything you need for some good exercise and some good fun. Head outside and bike away. Almost every town and every state park around here has an extensive array of bike trails, so you can almost always find somewhere new and interesting to ride, plus it'll help get you into shape really quick.

Hopefully, this list will provide for a ton of fun money-free weekends. Want some more tips? Here are [100 additional tips for saving money](#).