

# The life coach

Twelve things to do in your **LUNCH HOUR**

Everyone would love an extra five hours of free time each week, yet many of us fail to take our lunch entitlement, let alone make the most of it. Getting away from work isn't just rejuvenating - it can be hugely productive and even make us feel happier too, according to life coach Rebekah Fensome ([www.rebekahfensomelifecoach.com](http://www.rebekahfensomelifecoach.com)). "Doing something specific at lunchtime divides your day - physically and psychologically - which helps you appreciate your achievements and savour your time," she says. Here are 12 ways to take a more fulfilling lunch break...

## 1. Learn something new

Developing a new skill is synonymous with evening courses, but classes run during the day too. If you can't find one in

your local area, there are many excellent resources on the internet; the BBC website provides free online courses in French, Italian, Spanish and German.

## 2. Go on a date

Lunchtimes are perfect for blind dates as the immovable time constraint lets you escape if things go wrong - and if they go well you can always escalate to dinner the following week. Several dating agencies deal exclusively with arranging lunches - try [www.onlylunch.co.uk](http://www.onlylunch.co.uk) for the south east or [www.itsjustlunchleeds.co.uk](http://www.itsjustlunchleeds.co.uk) in Leeds.

## 3. Get organised

Log the birthdays of friends and family into [www.birthday-book.com](http://www.birthday-book.com) to ensure you never miss another date. This helpful website sends you email reminders beforehand and allows you to email people whose birthdays you don't know to automatically add their details.

## 4. Pamper yourself



morning. Brighten someone's day by using your time to pen and post a note.

## 8. Do your grocery shopping online

Most major supermarkets now offer excellent internet shopping and home delivery options - and any extra cost is outweighed by time and energy saved not travelling to the store. Doing your weekly shop at your desk can save an entire evening of effort.

## 9. Phone a friend

If you fall onto the sofa exhausted every evening, too tired to phone people as promised, try calling them during your lunch break instead. People are often more receptive - pleased to have a distraction - and cheaper mobile tariffs now make peak calls surprisingly inexpensive.

## 10. Enjoy some exercise

Government health guidelines recommend adults take 30 minutes of moderate exercise five times a week - which fits perfectly into weekday lunchtimes. Join a gym, find a local swimming pool or simply take a brisk walk around the block. In winter, getting outside during daylight is important for mental health, too.

## 11. Write a book

While many people's unfulfilled ambition is writing a book, novelists often admit the only difference between them and would-be authors is that they actually dedicate the necessary time. An hour every day spent writing will swiftly produce those crucial first chapters.

## 12. Take stock

Introspection helps us realise there is a lot to like about our lives, so Rebekah suggests finding a calm place and taking 15 minutes out to reflect on things, rather than rushing through the day not noticing what

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## 5. Go to an art exhibition

Not only is this a good way to catch some culture, but the calm ambience of galleries helps you unwind. Search for an exhibition near you at [www.24hourmuseum.org.uk](http://www.24hourmuseum.org.uk).

## 6. Give blood

Donating blood takes less than an hour and appointments are available throughout the day. You can donate three times a year and the safe, painless procedure will help save someone's life in an emergency. Contact the National Blood Service on 0845 771 1711 or visit [www.blood.co.uk](http://www.blood.co.uk).