

STAYING AT HOME

How to spend your time at home during corona

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Ota City Art Journal was originally created as a way for me to promote places that I had visited in Ota City to readers of the journal. Unfortunately, due to the Novel Coronavirus, it has become increasingly difficult for me to proactively travel around the city and promote doing as such.

During the pandemic, many people have cooperated by avoiding going out when possible, which has led to increased time being spent at home. After a year and a half, the situation still hasn't improved, and perhaps many people feel as though they have run out of things to do and want to find a way to spend their time at home more productively.

I hope this article gives you some ideas for how to spend your time at home!

■ GET INTO *cooking* AND START TO ENJOY MEAL TIMES AT HOME

With the government advising we stay at home, and the majority of restaurants and izakayas closing early and not serving alcohol, there is less opportunity to enjoy eating out.

I'm not a great cook and didn't do too much cooking by myself prior to the pandemic, so not being able to eat out was initially quite a tricky change to get used to. Consequently, I decided to buy the "Hot Cook" electric cooking pot, and from there began a routine of cooking at home every day. Since then, cooking has become so easy; and I feel as though I am eating far healthier and more balanced meals than before.

Weekend meals are a little bit more special – instead of cooking with the Hot Cook, I've started using the extra time to create my own at-home "restaurant experience", by watching cooking videos and attempting to make meals that I used to enjoy eating out before the pandemic, such as Italian and Mexican cuisine.

Creating your own at-home restaurant experience is cheaper than eating out, so why don't you give it a go?



■ *Reading:* EXPERIENCE TRAVEL WITHOUT LEAVING THE COMFORT OF YOUR HOME



At a time where we are unable to travel, I recommend staying home and exploring the world through reading now more than ever. Whether it be essays about places you hope to someday visit, or fantasy that don't actually exist in reality, you can go anywhere you want through the power of reading.

I particularly like fantasy books, so I recently re-read some of my favourite novels, including "Harry Potter" (by J.K. Rowling) and "Narnia" (by C.S. Lewis).

Reading not only allows us to relieve stress through "travelling" and escaping reality, it widens our perspective of the world and allows us to adopt new knowledge and skills – you can, as they say, "kill two birds with one stone".

EXPAND YOUR PERSPECTIVE OF THE WORLD THROUGH

TV and film

Much like reading, watching TV and film is another known way to escape reality and “travel” without leaving your home. Not just that, through TV and film, we are also able to learn about cultures and values, and see things from a variety of different angles.

These days, there are so many streaming services to choose from, from Netflix to Amazon Prime. Even if you don't own a television, you can easily get your hands on a vast variety of genres.

Watching foreign TV series and films can also help you polish up your foreign language skills, so I recommend those of you who are studying a foreign language to try utilizing TV and film as a study tool! I actually used Japanese TV as a study tool back when I was learning Japanese, by taking note of words I heard and shadowing what the actors and actresses said.



GET MOVING AND IMPROVE YOUR PHYSICAL HEALTH WITH AT-HOME

workouts



As time spent at home has increased, there are likely many of us that are worrying about lack of exercise and weight gain. Prior to the pandemic, I frequently went to the gym, but in effort of staying home as much as possible, I started going less and less often, to the point where I ended up deciding to cancel my membership.

Accordingly, in an attempt to raise my physical activity levels and improve my health, I bought “Fitness Boxing” and “Ring Fit Adventure” for the Nintendo Switch, and starting working out at home. On top of being enjoyable to play, the games are effective in increasing your level of physical activity. They are also good for a change of pace and can even help you relieve stress. You can adjust the workout lengths on both games, meaning you can enjoy working out even on days you feel you are too busy or are strapped for time.

ENJOY gaming WITH FRIENDS OR FAMILY

Of course, I don't only use games for exercise, I also enjoy playing sit-down games to pass the time. Last year, I bought myself a Nintendo Switch to play “Animal Crossing New Horizons”. The New Horizons game starts with you moving to a desert island. After getting settled and building a house, the aim of the game is to get friendly with the villagers (the animals) and enjoy a relaxing life of fishing, bug catching and fossil hunting, all the while trying to improve the island. I love the Animal Crossing games and have been playing them since I was a child.

Games like Animal Crossing and the Super Mario series can be played with friends and family online, no matter what the distance, so I really recommend them!

There are also many free and affordable games available to play on smartphones, so whether you have a gaming system or not, why don't you give gaming a go?



So that's it!

There are plenty of other at-home activities that I haven't mentioned, but these are my top 5! I hope they help inspire you, even if just a little!

It's important to not get too stressed despite the difficult times we are facing. Start by looking for something fun to do in your everyday life, no matter how small, and from there, we can work towards spending more fulfilling hours at home.