Beat Boredom – 16 Effective Strategies

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Are you feeling bored? Don’t know what to do with your time? Can’t seem to find anything interesting to do? If so, you might be burning to do something, but nothing seems interesting or entertaining. Everyone knows this annoying state of being. We’ve all been there. Boredom feels like being stuck between wanting to do something and not being able to find something compelling to do. It’s not that you don’t want to do something. It’s just that every activity you can think of seems dull and boring. Let’s change that! The following will present you 10 effective strategies to fight and eliminate boredom. Plus, we will present you a fabulous list of 55 brilliant ideas of amazing activities that kill boredom instantly. No need to feel lost by a little boredom. There’s a whole, wide world out there, only waiting for you to be explored. Here’s how to beat boredom. Let it inspire you and use it to fight boredom.

Being a kid of the 80s, managing to overcome boredom really isn’t anything new to me. Back then, boredom had quite another dimension. After all, there were no smartphones or tablets that could draw away one’s attention. Not to mention that the Internet did not even exist at that time. And video games mostly consisted of maneuvering pixilated characters through jump and run adventures that eventually became terribly boring. If you didn’t wanted to die of boredom back then, you definitely needed some excellent strategies to fight boredom. Here’s the time-proven approach to beat boredom I have been perfecting for decades.

“Is life not a thousand times too short for us to bore ourselves?”

Friedrich Nietzsche

Boredom can be fought with a threefold process. Firstly, it’s important to understand what boredom is and what it causes. Secondly, one needs to have some excellent strategies one can apply as soon as boredom kicks in. Thirdly, the last step at fighting boredom consists of having a list of magnificent activities that help you to break out of boredom.

Bored to death? It’s about time to change that!
The science of boredom

Each and every one of us is plagued by boredom every once in a while. We all know what boredom feels like, but what’s the scientific explanation behind boredom? Curious scientists have been exploring the subject for decades. However, there exists no real consensus among scientists about what boredom actually is. Yet, the internal processes that can cause the feeling of being bored are widely known among scientists. Responsible for boredom are (among other causes) low levels of a neurotransmitter, called dopamine. Dopamine is a chemical messenger of the human brain. It triggers responses in our brains whenever we experience a new and exciting situation.

Continuous repetition of a given activity, however, reduces the amount of dopamine that is released into the brain. Consequently, the level of dopamine in the brain starts to decrease. As a result, we start craving for a heightened sense of excitement, but struggle to provide it with our present activities. That’s the stage where the feeling of boredom starts to unfold. We’re no longer stimulated by the known activities and struggle to find new, exciting alternatives. In line with this thinking, John Eastwood and his colleagues define boredom as experiencing the want for something, but not being able to engage in an activity that satisfies the need.

The root cause of boredom

Even though there are clues that the ancient Greek philosophers pondered about the concept of boredom, it took quite a while until a word for boredom started to manifest. In fact, the word “boredom” wasn’t introduced to the English language until the year 1766. It appears that there simply was no need for such a word. Therefore, (excessive) boredom seems to be a relatively new phenomenon. Even more so, the number of people suffering from boredom seems to have increased with the progress of technology.

If you think about it, the rapid progress of technology has introduced countless of exciting distractions that help us to alleviate feelings of boredom. All these electronic devices are designed to fix the problem of being bored. And for a certain while, these things keep us entertained. But after some time, they no longer stimulate our need for exciting experiences. We crave for something new, without realizing the underlying issue.

The root cause of boredom lies in our ingrained desire to ‘do something’.

As we are living in the age of information, the vast majority of the population is used to being bombarded with information. Even worse, many of us have grown dependent on this type of entertainment. Without it, most people quickly feel uncomfortable.

We’ve become so used to be constantly doing something, even if it’s just watching TV, that the state of ‘not having something to do’ feels exceptionally strange. Not doing makes us feel guilty and vulnerable. After all, the concept of living is closely interwoven with doing to most of us. Therefore, inactivity seems to be the ultimate punishment and sin.

However, if we break it down, boredom is simply the desire to be entertained or to do something. It simply is the brain’s craving for (more) sensory stimulation.
By developing an understanding why you’re bored, you are one step closer to a solution. The following are further root causes of boredom:

- **Lack of energy** – One important cause of boredom lies in depleted/imbalanced energy levels. This could, for instance, be the case when you’re mentally drained, but physically not at all tired. In this case, boredom simply arises when your body wants to be physically engaged, while you’ve exhausted your mental energy and vice versa. An excellent solution to this kind of boredom is to engage yourself in an activity that uses the abundant energy. For instance, a graphic designer depleted of creative/mental energy could do some physical activity. On the other hand, a construction worker could try to engage in (creative) activities that require high levels of concentration.

- **Procrastination** – In many cases, people falsely assume that they’re bored, when in reality they are simply procrastinating. There’s a huge difference between being bored and simply trying to postpone responsibilities. In the first case, you’re not able to find a compelling activity to engage in. In the second case, you delay concerning yourself with tasks that you do not particularly like. Therefore, boredom may result from one’s inability to find something you can postpone your task with. This kind of uneasy state can be eliminated quickly by figuring out what responsibilities/tasks your postponing and why.

- **Lack of motivation/inspiration** – Often, boredom is simply the result of lacking the right motivation or inspiration. In these situations, we’re not bored as a result of our inability to find something compelling to do. Instead, we’re bored because we lack the right inspiration to engage in a specific activity. Almost all activities will eventually feel dull and boring. For this reason, it’s so important to make sure that we continuously keep refreshing our motivation and inspiration. Being inspired can make all the difference in overcoming boredom. Here’s more on this topic: Getting Motivated by Having a True Vision for Life.

- **Pattern interruption** – Another important root cause of boredom can be the interruption of your regular patterns. Meaning that your schedule has suddenly/unexpectedly changed. The result of this unexpected pattern interruption is oftentimes a severe feeling of being terribly bored. A sure fix way to deal with this kind of boredom is to actively seek new and engaging activities that quickly refill your schedule again. However, there’s also the option of using the newfound freedom for your personal growth by reflection and meditation.

By effectively addressing each and every one of these root causes, you’ll see that boredom can quickly become a thing of your past.

**Part I**

**10 effective strategies to overcome boredom**

**1. Quiet reflection & meditation**

Meditation is a true power tool you can use to fight off boredom.

Most people that are looking for effective strategies to combat boredom are desperately looking for new and exciting activities to engage in. Yet, providing new sensory stimuli will only work for a certain period of time. After this time has passed, they eventually become bored again. Combating boredom in this manner can be a true vicious circle. That’s because none of these new activities can actively address the underlying issue of boredom.
Meditation, on the other hand, addresses the root issue of any kind of boredom. It is far more effective than desperately seeking for new activities to engage in. That’s because meditation quickly increases your ability to be comfortable with ‘not doing.’

So instead of trying to fight off boredom, meditation helps you to increase your tolerance levels of not being engaged/entertained. Plus, scientific research has shown that mindfulness as a meditative technique reduces boredom. This leads us to the next important point on how to beat boredom:

2. Don’t fight boredom, try to enjoy it

As mentioned earlier, in an ever more hectic world, the process of ‘not doing’ is considered to be the ultimate sin. Thus, people are plagued by boredom and the feeling of being unproductive that comes with it. But contrary to popular belief, it’s not at all necessary to be continuously engaged in activities. And it certainly isn’t necessary to be entertained by our technological gadgets all the time.

So instead of feeding terribly ashamed when being bored, try to make use of these phases. Enjoy having nothing on your mind. Enjoy that there’s nothing you have to do. Use the time for rest and recharge your batteries. And eventually, you will notice that boredom starts to disappear.

The first two strategies have mainly addressed the issue of being more comfortable with the feeling of being bored. The following strategies will therefore mainly address ways to beat boredom.

3. Find your life’s direction

Meditation and being comfortable with boredom is all fine. But there might be another cause of boredom that these strategies cannot address: a lack of direction. Boredom can easily be caused by not really knowing the direction of your life. In these situations, the boredom you experience is a direct result of drifting through life without clear aim and purpose. You’re simply feeling bored because you’re not at all sure in what direction your life should progress.

Not being able to get your inner compass straight might leave you feeling stuck and paralyzed. It’s time to change that! You can maneuver your life in the right direction by truly pondering about your aims, goals but also your mission and vision in life. The process of finding the right direction for your life consists greatly of self-reflection and the identification of your strengths and weaknesses. Even more so, this process helps you to gain a better understanding about the possible purposes of your life.

4. Surround yourself with energizing people

Boredom can be truly addictive. Just remember the last time you had to spend some time with an incredibly uncreative, dull and boring person. It was just a matter of time until you became bored, too. Continuously surrounding yourself with people who are engaging in mindless and boring activities will eventually pull you into their bubble as well. On the other hand, by connecting with interesting people, you’ll always discover something new and exciting.
5. Actively seek to learn something new

Boredom often starts to arise once we have attained a certain level of mastery in any given adventure. In these situations, the feeling of being bored is a natural consequence of not being challenged. So instead of being comfortable with what you’ve accomplished, continuously strive to learn something new. Challenge yourself by plunging into new activities you’ve never done before. Get curious and explore the unknown. Learn a new skill or a new language. Read a book about a topic you’ve never even heard before. Whatever you do, learn something new each day:

- Read a random Wikipedia/etc. article each day
- Go to your local library and pick an interesting book
- Explore different intelligent YouTube channels
- Go to a museum you’ve never visited before
- Browse Reddit (for example: Today I Learned)
- Ask your friends to teach you an important skill
- Explore your local environment
- Go to an exhibition
- Watch a documentary

The intention behind all of this is to eliminate boredom by finding new avenues of mental stimulation.

6. Socialize

Boredom can also be a sign that you need some new input, social input that is. There are quite a lot of boredom-beating activities you can do by yourself, but sooner or later we all enjoy the companionship of other people. Humans are social beings, so it’s only natural that boredom can arise when we’re isolating ourselves. Once this kind of boredness starts to kick in, socializing is the best strategy of overcoming it. Go out and meet new people. Call your friends and spend some time with them. And even if your friends are busy at the moment, you can always join an interesting club or engage in charitable work.

7. Eliminate procrastination

The boredom that arises out of procrastinating tasks and responsibilities can feel quite terrible. It’s that kind of boredom that starts to kick in when you’re not able to find a compelling distraction to take your mind off your duty. On the one hand, you want to give your very best to postpone your task. On the other hand, there’s absolutely nothing that could take your attention away. The result is often that one simply starts daydreaming or engages in entirely useless activities.

There’s an easy way around this issue, even though most don’t like it: Do what needs to be done. Address the tasks you’re responsible of and you will not only kill the habit of procrastination, but you will also kill boredom.
8. Clear your ‘to do’ list

The state of being bored is an excellent opportunity for you to tick off all those things that are on your ‘to do’ list. I’m convinced there are dozens of activities you have been meaning to do, but never found the right time. Well, now is an excellent moment.

Plus, your motivation to get these things done can be quite high during times of great boredom. Especially when you cannot seem to find anything else to do.

9. Stop over-thinking

Usually, when people are confronted with boredom two things happen. First, they feel terrible. Second, they start over-thinking. They keep thinking about the problem. They’re bored and instantly want to find a solution. Without end, they analyze the situation, but are unable to free themselves.

Sometimes it’s just necessary to stop over-thinking. Stop asking yourself all kinds of questions. Don’t try to force yourself into doing something. Don’t try so hard to figure out how you can overcome boredness. It will only make things worse. And it will only burn you from the inside.

If you’re bored, fine. Accept it and see it for what it is: a temporary phase. And perhaps, it isn’t necessarily a bad thing per se.

10. Spice up your routines

Monotony can be another important factor contributing to boredom. As human beings, we have a great tendency to be creatures of habit. Routines give us a sense of security. And it’s quite comfortable to keep following your routine over and over again. However, habit and routine can also be important sources of boredom. By doing the same activities again and again, boredom will slowly but surely start to emerge. For this reason, try to occasionally break your routines. Introduce new activities and simply try to do things differently.

By having less routines you open yourself up to more flexibility. Even more so, it can greatly reduce monotony and its accompanying boredom. Here are just a couple of ideas to spice up your routines:

- Travel more often. Explore new environments.
- Go out and meet new people.
- Do things differently. Change the times you do things.
- Change the way you address issues.
- Stop wasting your time in a mindless manner

11. Allow yourself to feel bored

As pointed out countless times in this article, ‘not doing’ resembles the ultimate sin to many people. Consequently, we’re not allowing ourselves to feel bored. So whenever boredom starts to arise, we quickly try to get rid of it by doing random activities. Some watch TV for hours,
while others aimlessly surf the Internet. Still, the uncomfortable feeling of not doing something productive and being terribly bored remains. That’s because we’re not actually allowing ourselves to feel the boredom. We try to get rid of it, instead of openly confronting the feeling.

By allowing yourself to feel bored from time to time, you’ll get closer to the underlying issue. So instead of running from it, start digging into it. And by taking a much closer look at your boredom, you’ll quickly discover the underlying reasons for it. In some cases, you might just be procrastinating. Sometimes you’re simply lacking the right motivation. But in many other cases, the problem goes much deeper.

Perhaps you’re trying to protect yourself from difficulties by disconnecting from the world.

12. Get into the ‘flow’

Boredom could be considered the opposite of the flow state. Instead of engaging in activities that completely take our normal sense of time away, we start counting every second. Our focus is not directed on a specific activity, but solely on the misery we experience when bored.

Find pleasurable activities that allow you to re-enter the flow state. Everything that helps you to fully immerse yourself in an activity that absorbs your regular sense of self, time and space.

Just experiment with activities that allow you to put yourself in the flow state. These activities can range from gardening, drawing, writing, cooking, dancing, problem-solving, inventing to sports.

13. Start a journal

If you’re already feeling bored, you could as well use the time for reflection and journaling. It’s not even difficult. Just grab a piece of paper or open a document and start writing about whatever comes to mind. Reflect upon what happened to you during the day. Ponder about possible solutions to issues you are confronted with. Write about your dreams and your intentions to accomplish them. There’s no right and wrong in journaling. Just do it and see where the flow takes you.

14. Avoid mindless activities

Boredom often results out of the pursuit of purposeless activities. Who hasn’t spend hours watching TV, without being entertained? And I’m sure, we all spend some time surfing the Internet without real purpose. The problem with these mindless activities is that they provide no true value. As a result, chances are high that these activities will even further increase our boredom. So whenever you have the choice, make sure to opt for the activity/task that is providing a true value for you.
15. **Challenge yourself**

A huge number of people quickly become bored if they’re not continuously challenged. They seek the adventure and need the competition. Therefore, if you’re continuously faced with boredom, you might be missing activities that actually challenge you. Those activities that truly meet your needs, instead of just reaping the low hanging fruits.

16. **Create something with your hands**

By keeping your hands busy, you will not only reduce boredom, but also shift your focus away from the technology-oriented aspect of life. We’ve grown so used to use all our little technical gadgets, that we’ve entirely forgotten the joy of making something. You don’t even have to be a Master craftsman or a skilled artist. All it takes is the intention of turning an idea into reality. You could for instance paint a nice picture, knit a scarf or create a piece of art. Whatever comes to your mind is fine.

**Part II**

**55 brilliant activities that kill boredom instantly**

1. Live your life as if you were a spy
2. Watch TED talks
3. Go out in nature
4. Watch the stars (stargazing)
5. Take a nap
6. Listen to an audiobook
7. Watch people doing all kinds of absurd things
8. Invent exciting stories
9. Wander around in your city
10. Travel the world
11. Engage strangers in conversations
12. Write poetry
13. Learn a new language
14. Learn a strategy game
15. Take a bubble bath
16. Visit a contemporary art museum
17. Be a mentor to someone
18. Picnic in the park
19. Do a good deed
20. Do volunteer work
21. Visit a Renaissance fair
22. Create a vision board for your aims and dreams
23. Write and sing your own song
24. Start a book/movie club
25. Cook something you’ve never had before
26. Visit an art exhibition
27. Solve a crossword puzzle
28. Record a message to your future self
29. Let your mind wander / daydreaming
30. Start painting by numbers
31. Re-organize your Facebook profile
32. Send your friends surprise postcards
33. Make a collage out of old magazines or newspapers
34. Watch the sunrise and sunset
35. Write a bucket list
36. Host a themed movie night
37. Do a challenging puzzle
38. Learn calligraphy
39. Play charade games
40. Make a family scrapbook
41. Make a CD/playlist of the soundtrack of your life
42. Play board games
43. Research a subject
44. Take pictures
45. Create your own YouTube video
46. Paint a picture
47. Write a short story
48. Watch standup comedy
49. Spend time with your pet
50. Read a novel
51. Learn yoga
52. Watch a classic movie
53. Invent your own language
54. Have a costume night
55. Turn the music up and imagine you’re playing a live concert

These are just a few activities that have been proven to effectively fight boredom. You can add your own ideas to this list to make it even more powerful.

“I’m bored’ is a useless thing to say. I mean, you live in a great, big, vast world that you’ve seen none percent of. Even the inside of your own mind is endless; it goes on forever, inwardly, do you understand? The fact that you’re alive is amazing, so you don’t get to say ‘I’m bored.”

Louis C.K.

I hope you enjoyed this article on the ways to beat boredom.

Stay victorious!