

Match these headings with the correct paragraphs:

Guard your time

Make a difference

Why it's so hard

Set a date

Get creative

Meet likeminded people

Change your life

Establish your goals

Do what you want

Plan a head

Make Most of Your Free Time

- (1) Studies say that people nowadays have more free time than ever before. Then why doesn't it feel that way? These days, our free time is usually spent watching television, using computers or communicating on our phones. Images and information are constantly flashing into our brains, so it's no wonder we don't feel as if we have really switched off. To really wind down and help us regain our energy levels, it is important to use our free time wisely.
- (2) Think about what you want to achieve in your free time. Do you want to get fit, get creative or simply relax? Don't worry about what you ought to be doing, just think about what will make you feel more content.
- (3) Plan when you are going to enjoy your free time, and treat it in the same way as anything else on your calendar. If something else more important comes along, you can choose whether or not to postpone it, but never cancel it!
- (4) Make sure you have everything you need to enjoy your free time in advance. If you're looking forward to a nice long bath, buy in bath oil and candles. If you want to get out in the countryside, get your boots and map ready, and don't forget to check the weather forecast.
- (5) Don't let anything else encroach on your free time. Ignore the washing up and the vacuuming. Don't check your inbox for messages and turn off your mobile phone. Otherwise, the lines between free time and everyday live will begin to blur, and you won't feel refreshed.
- (6) In many free time activities, we take the role of consumer. When we watch TV, play video games or read, we are only passively involved. Take on the role of producer for a change. Build a model, write a blog or make an animation film. You will use a different part of your brains and will feel more energised as a result.
- (7) But don't go overboard. Many people worry too much about their free time activities. They want to do things that will impress their friends, look good on their résumés or help them get a

better job. But free time isn't about that. It is about doing an activity for enjoyment's sake, so don't let outside pressures influence your choice.

- (8) Take the opportunity to expand your social circle. Everyone has different interests, so don't expect your mates to be into the same things you are. Give them a break for a while, join a club and get to know people with the same interests as you. You can never have too many friends!

- (9) You'll really know you're using your time wisely if what you're doing helps other people. So find out what's going on in the community and lend a hand. Visit the elderly or help out in a children's club. If socialising's not your thing, why not volunteer for a wildlife organisation?

- (10) Once you're relaxed and energised, you can think about what you'd like to improve in your life. Want to get fit? Learn a skill? Improve your job prospects? There are plenty of groups, clubs and classes you can join that will set you on a completely new life path. So what are you waiting for? Get out there and enjoy yourself!