

Free time and hobbies

How do you like to spend your free time?

Where do young people in this country usually spend their free time?

Which hobbies are the most popular in your country?

What new activity would you like to try doing in your free time?

Are there any activities that you used to do but don't do anymore?

Why did you stop?

Do you know anyone that has a weird hobby?

STRANGE HOBBIES FROM AROUND THE WORLD

We all have our own ways of passing the time. A lot of us have the conventional hobbies like reading, playing video games, or running. Others may be into more specific things like fly-fishing or salsa dancing. But do a quick inventory of all the hobbies among your friends and family and you're unlikely to come across a pastime as weird as the ones listed below. So your Dad's interested in antique stamp collecting? I doubt it can beat faking your own death as a hobby!

How about doing some ironing in mid-air in the middle of a skydive? If you think you know what a bizarre hobby looks like, you haven't come across these people before. Taking up an interest in your spare time and sticking to it takes passion and dedication, but to read about some of the following pursuits it would seem that insanity is also a vital ingredient to maintaining a hobby. What makes someone suddenly decide that they want to start collecting their own belly fluff and keep it in a jar? Gross.

In some ways, these weird past times from around the globe involve a lot of the same elements as your average ones – collecting, being outdoors, crafting, etc. But this is most definitely where the similarities end. Each of these so-called "hobbies" has put a strange twist on everyday pursuits and the results are equally hilarious and gross. Here's a collection of 5 insanely weird hobbies from around the world...

EXTREME IRONING (UK): For those of you out there who aren't exactly into regular ironing, maybe you'd like to take up extreme ironing? This takes the boring household chore and puts a slightly death-defying spin on it. The hobby that began in the UK has gained appreciation worldwide and has seen dedicated followers posting pictures of themselves ironing on mountain tops, on kayaks and even while skydiving.

The sport of extreme ironing apparently began back in 1997 in the UK when a guy named Phil Shaw from the West Midlands had plans to go rock-climbing with some friends but also had a mountain of ironing to do that day. His solution? Take the mountain of creased clothes to the mountain itself! Well, not quite a mountain, but a tall rock formation. From that day forth, a hobby was born. When the view from your kitchen window isn't enough...

FAKING YOUR OWN DEATH (USA): If the name Chuck Lamb rings a bell with you, congratulations – you're a hardcore horror film geek. Chuck Lamb from Ohio is also known as the "Dead Body Guy" and has made appearances in several horror films – all thanks to his bizarre hobby of faking his own death. Chuck originally had dreams of being an actor, but after deciding that he didn't feel confident enough in a speaking role, he changed his focus to a more silent kind of role... make that very silent.

Lamb's hobby of playing dead has gained the attention and admiration of horror fans around the world and it has even helped him earn a modest career as a corpse in a few horror movies. Some of Chuck's movie credits include things like "Corpse #3" and "Dead Guy" in the TV series *What I Like About You*. Chuck was dying to be an actor and he looks like he finally got his wish (sorry).

MOOING (USA): This is about as minimal as a hobby can get. The activity of mooing pretty much just involves... that's right, mooing. However, professional mooers (or is that mooists?) didn't think it was enough just to imitate a cow with their voice, so they built an entire community around it and that, of course, involves dressing up as cows and holding state fairs and

competitions around the country to celebrate the wonders of mooing together. How utterly ridiculous.

The hobby of mooing originated in the dairy state of Wisconsin where the official mooing competition known as "Moo-la-palooza" is held in order to try and find the best cow impersonator ever. The most recent winner of the Moo-la-palooza grand prize was 10-year-old Austin Siok who delivered a "Moo" so fantastic, he won \$1000, a golden cow bell and a year's supply of sub sandwiches. (If any of them contain beef, isn't that a bit cannibalistic for a dedicated cow impersonator?)

TOY VOYAGING (WORLDWIDE): Buzz and Woody went on their own little adventures in Toy Story, so who's to say real-life toys can't experience the same fun? The hobby known as "toy voyaging" has gained momentum on social media in recent years and it involves sending your favorite toy out into the world for a vacation. The odd part is, you won't be there with it. A company called ToyVoyagers actually arranges for your toy to be sent to a temporary accommodation anywhere in the world and then sends you photo updates of your little stuffed pal.

Once someone across the world has your beloved toy, you can even give them instructions and missions as to where you'd like to see them go. This sounds really cute and inventive and all, but what if your toy got lost or stolen by its temporary owners? No good can come of this! Plus, it's a bit of a kick in the teeth to come home from a lousy day at the office only to find photos of your teddy bear drinking wine under the Eiffel Tower.

COLLECTING ECSTASY (NETHERLANDS): Taking up this kind of "hobby" would normally get you arrested faster than you can say MDMA, but one man in the Netherlands has managed to get a pretty big collection of ecstasy going. He doesn't actually take the stuff, he just stores a case full of it. (Sure, we believe you.) Dutch authorities were alerted to this man's illegal hobby when they received a report of theft in 2009. It was the 46-year-old ecstasy collector, telling them that a burglar had stolen his E collection (2,400 pills worth, to be exact!).

The Dutch man – who is yet to be identified – had reportedly started collecting ecstasy pills because he appreciated the various colors and stamp markings on them, but had denied ever taking the drugs himself. The Dutch police never charged the man for possession as they didn't have sufficient evidence. Although, as a police spokesperson commented: "Why would you make this up?"

BUG FIGHTING (JAPAN): A bit like cock fighting but with insects, the unusual and cruel sport of bug fighting is a hobby that has gained a huge following online in Japan. All kinds of insects are entered into a fighting pit or "arena" and pitted against each other to fight to the death. These fights are usually recorded and put up online, where a loyal (and quite clearly disturbed) audience watch with the same level of excitement as the Super Bowl.

Japan is certainly no stranger to fighting games and weird competitive sports. This is the birthplace of sumo wrestling and Pokémon after all. Speaking of Pokémon, the hobby of bug fighting is thought to be inspired by the popular TV series and video game. I don't remember the blood and guts shown in the original Pokémon games. Also, they were virtual animals, so it wasn't as morally questionable when you watched their health bar drain to zero.

What was your impression when reading about these hobbies?

In your opinion, which is the most bizarre hobby?

Why do you think these people chose these kinds of hobbies?

Would you be willing to try any of them?