

25 Creative and Surprising Things to Do When You Feel Lonely

by Charley Mendoza

Did you know that in Korea, people are recording themselves while having dinner? And people are actually paying to watch these videos! Is this another sign of loneliness creeping up on all of us?

According to a study of more than 170,000 people published at the Psychology Bulletin in 2013, the average adult's network of friends and colleagues have shrunk over the past 3 decades. It's no wonder many people feel lonelier than ever.

Feeling lonely, however, is not a direct cause of being alone. It's possible to feel lonely in a crowd.

Loneliness, in fact, is more dangerous than isolation because it increases a person's mortality rate, according to John Cacioppo, co-author of Loneliness: Human Nature and the Needs for Social Connection.

If it's so dangerous, how do we fight loneliness then?

Wondering What to Do When You Feel Lonely? Here Are 25 Tried and Tested Tips

1. Just Show Up

Familiarity breeds attraction. A study published at the Journal of Personality and Social Psychology found that same-sex strangers felt increasing affinity towards each other, after each conversation they had. The same goes for online chat conversations. Don't be hesitant to talk to people, even if you feel awkward or don't like them at first. If you're genuinely interested or curious about others, they're more likely to reciprocate those feelings.

2. Go On A Solo Date

You know the problem with group and couples dates? The annoying "So what do we do?" and "Where do we eat?" questions. When you go on a date with yourself, you're sure to go somewhere you actually like and you don't have to wait around for others to decide.

3. Know The Difference Between Loneliness and Isolation

Loneliness is an emotion, mostly triggered by a sad memory.² Unfortunately the brain loves to overanalyze things, so even momentary loneliness can escalate to longer spells because of thoughts like "Why do I feel so alone?" and "Am I a loser no one loves?" When this happens, just acknowledge the feeling and don't overreact.

4. Attend Meetups

Go to [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) and find a group in your city. There are tons of meetup groups catering to every interest, job, city and hobby, so it's impossible not to find a group to your liking. People who join [meetup.com](https://www.meetup.com) are eager to meet new people, and are incredibly friendly so it's a nice way to make new friends.

5. Watch A Movie

Watch a movie alone or call some friends to go with you—it doesn't matter. What's important is you immerse yourself in an interesting story that'll erase your gloomy thoughts. Watch a chick-flick, or a super hero movie—anything but a tear jerker, really —and grab lots of candy and popcorn.

6. Volunteer

Focusing on the needs of others steers your mind away from sad thoughts. It's impossible to feel lonely when you're feeding the homeless, reading to kids at an orphanage, or dancing with grandmas at a salsa class. Helping the less fortunate will also fill you with immense gratitude.

7. Adopt A Cute Pet

A furry cat or dog will cheer you up. The playfulness of pets, plus the troubles (and fun) you'll experience while training them will make you forget about your troubles. Even a goldfish or pretty parrot can do wonders for your mood.

8. Identify The Cause Of Your Loneliness

“What to do when you feel lonely?”

I can't imagine how many people have Googled that phrase when they felt the pangs of loneliness. Unfortunately, it's not the best question to ask. Would you ask a doctor for a prescription before they check your symptoms?

Instead of trying things randomly, hoping one solution will do the trick—losing hope and feeling worse when it doesn't—it's better to identify the cause of your loneliness first. If you were previously happy in your own company, what could've caused you to feel lonely this time?

Do your friends make you feel lonely? Is it your work or surroundings, perhaps? The cause of your loneliness will clue you in on the appropriate solution.

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9. Read Fiction

Please don't pick a Dummies book on how to stop feeling lonely. Reading self-help when you're feeling miserable will make just you feel worse. Read a good novel instead. Losing yourself in a good story or identifying with a powerful character will boost your confidence and fill you with a sense of adventure.

10. Take A Bath

Where do good ideas come from? In the shower, right? Taking a nice, long, and relaxing bath is a great way to be bask in your alone time, instead of drowning in self-pity. Ladies, prepare a glass of red, chocolates and magazines. Gents, take a bubble bath ala Chandler by taking a manly boat with you!

11. Take A Random Bus, Train or Flight Off to Anywhere

Taking public transportation to a random location forces you to do two things—be in the company of strangers, and change your environment. Doing this will ward off loneliness and cure your wanderlust as well.

12. Dance (Naked)²

Sometimes, we feel lonely because we're actually alone. So take this chance to do the things you can only do when you're alone, like dancing naked or jumping on the bed with your shoes on. Doing crazy stuff alone will give you a good laugh.

13. Go For A Quick Run

Running is scientifically proven to make you happier. Even 30 minutes of walking can instantly lift your mood, according to a 2006 study published at Medicine & Science in Sports & Exercise.

14. Watch Friends

Okay, it's now obvious that I love this show! I've watched it 5x now and it still makes me laugh. Watch "The One with the Unagi" and "The One With the Embryos" if you're feeling lonely and need a good laugh.

15. Get Coffee

Go to a coffee shop far from your apartment or office. Then order coffee and sit on the bar, or that big table on the center where you can talk to people. Compliment someone on their tie, shoes or bag. Start a conversation. Don't worry if you're bad at small talk, because chances are you won't see that person again.

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16. Practice #JOMO

Social media is helpful, but it could be detrimental depending on how you use it. When your default behavior is to keep scrolling on Facebook instead of talking to whoever's with you, or taking a picture of everything you eat instead of just savoring it, then it's time to experience the joy of missing out (JOMO)—a practice promoted by Randi Zuckerberg. Yes, she's Mark Zuckerberg's sister.

17. Make Your Bed

Making your bed in the morning, and doing a quick two-minute wipe down in your kitchen at night, will make you feel better and in control of your life. Gretchen Rubin, author of *The Happiness Project*, says her research for the book revealed that bed-making is one of the keystone habits of happy people.

18. Look Through Old photos

Prepare some snacks or some tea and canapés ala afternoon high-tea, if you're feeling fancy. Reminisce the good old days with a friend, your mom or sis. Remembering your crazy antics, and most embarrassing moments caught on camera will fill you with nostalgic memories and drive away loneliness.

19. Get A Camera

Get a camera, then go out and start taking beautiful pictures of things around you. A sunset, a barking dog, or a laughing baby—filling your life with beautiful things can take your mind off of loneliness.

20. Attend Classes For A Fun New Exercise Like Air Yoga, Pole Dancing, Or Trampoline Jumping

The exact exercise doesn't matter. The point is to get yourself moving, while trying something new in the supportive environment of a group class.

21. Start A 5-Minute Gratitude Journal

It's hard to feel down when you know that you have a lot to be thankful for. When you don't know what to be thankful for, just write what you feel. Sometimes, it can help you identify why you feel lonely in the first place.

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22. Watch Inspiring Ted Talks

Ted Talks are inspiring and informative. I don't know why, but watching a few Ted Talks really help when I feel lonely and helpless. Some of my favorites are: "Connected, but alone?" by Sherry Turkle, and "Success, failure and the drive to keep creating" by Elizabeth Glibert.

23. Plan A holiday

Nothing beats loneliness and overwhelm like planning a great holiday vacation. Looking up flights, hotel deals and stuff to do on a random faraway location will boost your spirits and steer your mind off your negative thoughts. You don't really need to book a trip, sometimes the act of planning for one is enough.

24. Create Something New

Wondering how to not feel lonely, when you actually prefer to be alone? Getting bored is a prerequisite of feeling lonely. And what's one of the main causes of getting bored? Having nothing to do. So keep yourself occupied! Try a new recipe. Create a scrapbook. Finish that DIY project you've been postponing for so long.

25. Do Something Craazy

Dress up like a tourist, and do all the cheesy touristy things in your city. Eat the local delicacy, tour the crowded tourist spots and explore new locations you've never heard of.

How Do You Deal With Loneliness?

Do you have other tips on fighting loneliness? Share them with me @CharleyWrites or comment below.