

FOREVER YOUNG AT HEART!

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One of my favorite ways to get some exercise is to get outdoors and take a walk. And living



near the ocean always invites a beach walk. Look what my friend and I found! Not sure if the driftwood teeter-totter landed that way naturally on the beach or was created by some playful individuals. But we didn't lose any time taking advantage of climbing on and reliving our childhood memories.

I think George Bernard Shaw was right when he said, "We don't stop playing because we grow old; we grow old because we stop playing."

Just because you're an adult, don't let play get left behind and constantly replaced with deadlines, responsibilities, and the everyday demands of a career and family. Research has found that taking a break and having a little fun improves our problem-solving abilities, engages our imagination, and can increase our creativity.

7 Ways to Become More Playful:

1. **Go Outside.** Breathe some fresh air, get oxygen into your lungs and brain. Exposure to sunlight produces the Vitamin D your body needs. Stop and smell the roses literally and figuratively—discover nature's many wonders.

2. **Be Present and Live in the Moment.** Capitalize on opportunities as they appear and appreciate fun when it occurs. Put down the smartphone! Do something spontaneous, preferably every day.
3. **Become More Childlike.** And I don't mean childish. They are different. Childlikeness is play-oriented and generous whereas childishness is defined by an inability to take responsibility and to see beyond our needs alone.
4. **Laugh More.** Play and laughter go hand-in hand. It stimulates the thymus gland which helps to regulate body's immune system, encourages the release of 'feel good' endorphins while reducing the production of the stress hormones (cortisol and adrenalin), lowers blood pressure, improves circulation and respiratory function while decreasing inflammation and infection.
5. **Spend Time With Children.** Observe and learn from them the ingredients to become more playful—spontaneity, curiosity, and joy. Be a co-player and facilitator of play with children, not only of constructive, exploratory and dramatic play but also of physical play.
6. **Don't Worry About Appearances.** If you stop worrying about what other people think, you can feel more unrestrained and experience the joy that it sometimes seems only children feel. And the other people observing are probably thinking, "That looks like fun! Why didn't I think of that?"
7. **Connect With Playful People.** Intentionally and frequently spend time with playful friends. Being with others will open your mind to new perspectives, ideas, and new ways of thinking, feeling. Being around people, and being friendly and comfortable with them, will increase the overall playfulness quotient.

*~ Remember to balance work and play ~
Rediscover the child within you and let him or her out to play!*

