

200 FUN THINGS TO DO BESIDES SHOPPING

Compiled by Elizabeth Barr: Peer Counselor at the Hoarding Behavior Program (MHASF). This document is inspired by *Buried in Treasures 2nd Edition* by David F. Tolin, Randy O. Frost, and Gail Steketee.

Approximately 80% to 92% of people with Hoarding Disorder (HD) have consciously made the decision to acquire an excessive number of belongings at some point in the past (Dr. Randy Frost et al 2021). This phenomenon is known as “active acquiring” and includes purchasing objects in stores, surfing the internet, bargain hunting at thrift stores or garage sales, or finding free things on the street. The sense of pleasure in “**scoring a good deal**” can be incredibly attractive – even intoxicating; turning “retail therapy” into a favorite pastime for most people with HD, despite the remorse that often follows an acquiring episode. However, research shows that no real progress can be made, until the urge to actively acquire is tamed. Even if the person is actively discarding objects – these efforts will be not be enough if on-going acquiring continues.

The term “passive acquiring” applies to objects such as junk mail, packaging from products, gifts from others, or inheritance. These items seem to enter the home all by themselves, and have a life of their own. A hallmark characteristic for people with HD is indecisiveness. Hence, even objects such as trash or junk mail can be overwhelmingly difficult to dispose of.

On page 117 of the book, “*Buried in Treasures*” 2nd Edition, the authors state the following, “Another critical component is to find other activities that replace the enjoyment that acquiring provides. What would you like to do instead of going to flea markets or yard sales on Saturday?” The authors suggest writing a list of enjoyable activities that do not involve actively acquiring additional possessions.

I’m Elizabeth Barr and I’m a Peer Counselor with lived experience with HD. I facilitate groups for other people facing this issue at The Mental Health Association of San Francisco (MHASF.) Together, the participants of these groups have created this list in order to avoid acquiring more objects and to reward ourselves for decluttering.

We tackle a decluttering project we have been procrastinating on and then reward ourselves for decluttering. The tactic is to (a) WORK, or be productive for a while, (b) then REST and regain strength, (c) then PLAY, or do some kind of fun activity. We’ve found that if we aren’t being productive ... we are tyrannized by the guilt of procrastination. If we don’t rest ... we won’t have the strength or stamina to continue. If we don’t play ... life isn’t worth living. Most

importantly, we have found it vital to train our minds (just like Pavlov's dog) to expect a reward. For example, I tell myself that when I finish washing the dishes, I can reward myself by watching TV. It doesn't work to watch TV first, and then do the dishes. It is likely that procrastination will set in.

**Please note that many of the activities listed below can be done in a manner that maintains social distancing during the pandemic.

😊😊😊 200 FUN THINGS TO DO BESIDES SHOPPING 😊😊😊
OR FUN WAYS TO REWARD MYSELF FOR DECLUTTERING (Work, Rest, Play, Repeat)

1. I like to stream free movies and music via Kanopy, The SF Library Free Movie Site.
2. Visit virtual museum tours .
3. Dance: I like to dance in my living room. Do dance classes on Zoom. Learn how to square dance, tango, rumba, waltz, swing dance, line dancing or folk dancing. You name it and someone is participating in that dance form. Go to City College of SF. They have a ton of great dance classes. No experience and no partner is necessary.
4. Go to a car show.
5. Listen to music
6. Take a walk or go for a hike.
7. Reading is good as long as I'm not obsessively reading to avoid my responsibilities.
8. I am a member of a choir and during the pandemic, we met on Zoom.
9. Develop a sense of community while being closer to the home due to Covid-19. Use Zoom and other technologies to create this community.
10. Continue to go to church via Zoom or in-person.
11. Volunteer to help others. Thus, I can prevent myself from feeling sorry for myself. Helping others helps me.
12. Watch TV.
13. Talk to friends on the phone, text message, facetime, or Zoom.
14. Spend special time in the kitchen cooking unique meals.
15. Make healthy meals for myself including smoothies.
16. Sew. Be creative with my sewing and crafting projects. Alter my clothes.
17. Google EventBrite host a lot of events that I can participate in worldwide. This includes classes etc.

18. Cooking: I like to watch the cooking channel with shows such as the Pioneer Woman. Lots of butter!!!
19. I take classes online including classes on learning Spanish. I learn Spanish by practicing 10 minutes a day.
20. Do fun things instead of just working on the hard stuff all the time. WORK, REST, PLAY, REPEAT!!!
21. Indoor and outdoor gardening.
22. Eat ice cream.
23. Spend time in my swimming pool.
24. Make art at home. Make art on Zoom
25. Create music (play my instrument).
26. Sit in front of the fireplace during the winter.
27. Take a bubble bath.
28. Utilize alternative therapies: these include acupuncture, chiropractic adjustments, cryotherapy, massage, and aromatherapy etc.
29. Have “six-foot lunches” with your friends. It’s okay to continue to do things via social distancing.
30. I’ll reconnect with people I haven’t seen for a long time – people from my past. I’ll make peace with my past.
31. Do Zoom rooms with friends. See friends instead of just talking to them on the phone. Connect regularly. Have a zoom party.
32. Join a book club in-person or on Zoom.
33. Take a friend out who is celebrating their birthday.
34. Have a game night in-person or on Zoom.
35. Play solitaire
36. Get a Mani – Pedi
37. Take over the kitchen and do some baking. Yum!!!
38. Make a decision that if I am going to buy something, it will be something extra special. (Think outside the box.)
39. Make a decision that if I’m going to buy something, I’ll buy something that is physically SMALL. Thus, it will take up less space.
40. Sit down and look at a magazine or newspaper.

41. Go outside on the deck and get some fresh air.
42. Take out a foot massager device and get my foot massaged.
43. Have lively music on while I'm decluttering. Then while I'm resting, I can have calming music to remind me that I'm resting.
44. Schedule routines, habits, and systems. I'll be sure to include scheduling time for fun things.
45. I play a music video that was filmed at Joshua Tree in the desert. The video is so beautiful that it makes me cry.
46. Watch the sunset.
47. Go to a beautiful place.
48. Find meaning in special words (such as lyrics, poems, or books.)
49. Go out and walk in a natural environment.
50. Stand up and stretch.
51. Stop and drink some water.
52. Pet an animal.
53. Go to the park and watch the children play.
54. Take a long drive or ride on public transit to a place I rarely go just to look around.
55. Take a piece of wood and whittle.
56. Go to the dog park and watch the dogs. Hey, maybe you'll get lucky and one of the dogs will stop to say hello. Woof Woof.
57. Meditate.
58. Look at the area I have decluttered and just TAKE IT IN. Pat myself on the back.
59. Drink a cup of tea (coffee, soda, or juice.)
60. Massage my hands or neck.
61. Watch TV. Then get up and declutter during the commercials.
62. Doodle.
63. Do a crossword puzzle.
64. Declutter for a while, then take a break and work on a jigsaw puzzle, then go back to decluttering.

65. Declutter for a while, then take a break and watch Fred Astaire and Ginger Rodgers dancing on YouTube. Then go back to decluttering.
66. Put lotion on my hands and arms.
67. Have an Oscar Awards Party. Join with friends on Zoom or in-person. Prepare ahead of time with popcorn.
68. Attend an educational lecture on Zoom or in-person.
69. Find a new park to visit.
70. Be a tourist in my own hometown. Look for cheesy things to do that a tourist would eat right up and do them myself. Maybe there are some things I've never done? Maybe there are others I've done a million times? Maybe I can do that cheesy thing one more time and still get some pleasure out of it? Oops, I've never gone on a double decker bus through SF! Maybe I can go and do that?
71. Look at old photos.
72. Send a card to a friend.
73. Put money into a savings account.
74. Build something fun, such as a birdfeeder or a fancy mailbox.
75. Watercolor.
76. Knit pot-holders and give them away as gifts.
77. Make a scrap book.
78. Organize photo albums.
79. Write a poem.
80. Do something kind for someone else. Do this to try and strengthen my connection to others.
81. Eat at a restaurant.
82. Go out to a movie theatre.
83. Go to a play.
84. Go to a concert.
85. Go to a dance recital.
86. Go to a party. Zoom parties count.
87. Go roller-skating.
88. Go bowling.

89. Go on a bicycle ride
90. Go to the gym and workout
91. Learn how to macrame.
92. Draw in a coloring book for adults.
93. Do beaded crafts like bookmarks.
94. Make my own greeting cards to send out.
95. Do genealogy and find out about my family history/tree.
96. Write about my feelings in a journal.
97. Get a facial.
98. Take a nap.
99. Feed the birds.
100. Pray.
101. Attend a Clutterers Anonymous (CLA) meeting
102. Call a Clutter Buddy.
103. Take a walk on the beach and search for seashells.
104. Lay on the grass and look for shapes in the clouds.
105. Be adventurous and try a brand-new restaurant.
106. Attend a Zoom support group at MHASF.
107. Call the California Peer-Run Warm line if I'm feeling isolated.
108. Fingerpaint.
109. I like going to those places where they let you paint ceramics.
113. Go to a bar and get drunk.
114. Invite friends and family over despite the condition of my home.
115. Cook something fabulous for the holidays and bring it over to a holiday party.
116. Attend a Clutterers Anonymous Declutterthon (marathon meetings).
117. Take a sauna
118. Go into a hot tub.
119. Take a mud bath.

120. Decorate for the holidays. Decorate even if it has to be in a humble way. Decorate even if the decorations are surrounded by clutter.

121. Go to an amusement park like Disneyland, or Coney Island etc.

122. Write a gratitude list of all the things I am grateful for. Add to it every day. Eventually, I will see that the things I am grateful for will end up in the thousands. It's hard to feel empty when I am filled with gratitude. Maybe if I feel less empty, I will stop acquiring so many objects to fill in the void?

123. Tell other people what I am grateful for.

124. Travel

125. Help my family even if they frustrate me sometimes.

126. Look for a new job. Make looking for a new job an act of self-love.

127. Go to a 12th Step Program meeting in a park.

128. Light candles and have flowers on my table.

129. Burn incense.

130. Establish clutter-free zones or sacred spaces throughout the house and maintain them as an act of self-love. Start out small. Start out with a square inch space and build from there.

131. Get extra sleep when needed. Try to avoid sleepless nights.

132. Go to a mirror and look at myself. Tell myself, "I love you" over and over again. Do this every day for two weeks.

133. Binge watch my favorite TV shows and/or Netflix movies.

134. Water my indoor and outdoor plants. Talk to them and touch them. Give them some love.

135. Get my hair cut.

136. Come up with some kind of special holiday plans so I don't feel depressed or sorry for myself.

137. Give someone else a special gift for the holidays. If I can't have a Hallmark Moment for myself, maybe giving it to someone else will help me? I could donate some time to help feed the poor or volunteer for a senior center etc.

138. Be mindful of how much I eat on my holiday meal so I won't feel guilty if I'm on a diet.

139. Keep better track of my budget so I can take better care of myself financially.

140. Create a nice outdoor space where I can safely entertain others.

141. Donate money, goods, time, or services to a charity. Clean out an area in my home and donate the extra stuff. Why hang on to something if I'm not really using it? There is probably someone else out there who would really appreciate this object.
142. Let go of toxic relationships and develop new ones with healthier people.
143. Sing in the shower even if I think I sound bad.
144. Tell a silly joke to a child. Play with a kid.
145. Wash the dogs so they don't stink so much when I'm around them. They will be happier and so will I.
146. Make a shrine to a departed loved one. That way I'll have a place to honor them. Take photos of their stuff and let go of the things I don't actually use. I don't have to keep my loved one's things to honor or remember them.
147. Do the laundry. I love clean laundry.
148. Put clean sheets on the bed. Ahhhhh, it feels so good to cuddle up in clean sheets!!
149. Get my eyebrows shaped and dyed. Get my eyelashes done. I can either put fake lashes on or dye them to make them look longer.
150. Light a prayer candle.
151. Sit in a sunny spot in the living room.
152. Get on FaceBook. Time myself so I don't obsess and lose too much time there. Use FaceBook as a special treat and not addictively.
153. Go to a science museum.
154. Go to a planetarium
155. Take a telescope and study the night sky.
156. Burn sage in the house. Have a house-cleansing ceremony ridding the house of bad vibes.
157. Hang a dream catcher above my bed.
158. Get my back scratcher out and scratch my back. Hey, ask a friend to scratch it for me – even better.
159. Curate my collections and get rid of the junk. Save the best and get rid of the rest.
160. Get all dressed up for myself. Put earrings and perfume on. Maybe even wear a pretty dress or skirt.
161. Do a fashion show with a friend who is a fashionista. We work out what looks good and what doesn't. We come up with some general guidelines. I donate the extra clothes based on questions like, "Does this currently fit me? Is this garment damaged? Is it flattering on me?"

Is it in fashion? Do I want it because I am looking at it right now? Would I buy this again if I saw it in a store? Have my fashionista friend help me to get honest about my wardrobe. Make a deal with myself that I can't buy any new clothes or accessories until I sort through the clothes I already have. Once I sort through my wardrobe, I can treat myself to a new garment (or even two.)

162. Sit outside and drink in the sun.

163. Take a walk in the rain.

164. Go skiing. Go snow skiing or water skiing. If I can't do it anymore, it would still be fun to hang out in the ski lodge or in the boat and watch others.

165. Take a walk with a friend in the woods. They call that forest bathing.

166. Talk to my therapist or psychiatrist.

167. Talk to my 12th Step Program sponsor or step-study group co-sponsors about a problem.

168. Work the steps around why I want to buy something that I don't need. I have soooooo much other stuff. Why do I think I need even more??

169. Engage in some appropriate sexual activity.

170. Go to a busy public place and people watch.

171. Build a snowman.

172. Have a snowball fight.

173. Build a sandcastle

174. Play catch with the dog.

175. Take pictures.

176. Get my teeth cleaned. (Smile beautiful).

177. Go to a botanical garden to look at what master gardeners can do.

178. Take a tour of an historical building.

179. Do some yoga. Salutation to the sun anyone?

180. Go fishing.

181. Go swimming at the gym.

182. Watch sports on TV with some buddies or go to a sports bar for the big game.

183. Make s'mores at a campfire.

184. Go camping in a tent, camper, or in the back of a truck.

185. Go see a live game such as the high school championship basketball tournament. The tickets don't cost much, the games are interesting, and the parents are always up in arms.
186. Take a ride on the back of a motorcycle.
187. Learn how to crochet.
188. Go and watch the folks who do hand gliding.
189. Do body surfing in the waves. If I can't do it myself anymore, it is still fun to watch others out in the surf.
190. Shoot a game of pool in a pool hall.
191. Play some video games at an arcade.
192. Play some video games on my own TV set or computer.
193. Watch hip hop dancers do their thing.
194. Go rafting on a river. It doesn't have to be white water rafting. It can be more like floating down a river on an inner tube.
195. Go to the senior center and hang out and socialize. They have all kinds of cool services like a) senior exercise workouts b) meals c) computer classes d) karaoke e) art classes f) ukulele club g) ping-pong h) special educational lectures like how to sign-up for medi-care and i) limited health-care support.
196. Play bingo.
197. Play Mark Polo in the pool.
198. Volunteer at the local animal shelter. Go in and pet the dogs and cats to help socialize them. The more social they are, the more likely they will be adopted. Pet an animal – save a life.
199. Join a dating service and maybe go on a date. Flirt with someone. Yikes!!!
200. Clean my damn house.