



## 7 Ways to Increase Your Creativity

Inspired by the “Seeing Without a Camera” Program

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You don't have to be a photographer or even own a camera to practice your creativity. A camera is simply a practical and accessible way to keep creative. Below are great ways in which you can increase your creativity. These should be practiced on a daily or weekly basis.

1. Keep a Journal – a personal journal is a great way to record what you are feeling, what you might say before a job interview or a place to record your goals. By keeping it with you at all times, you can write about the strange and interesting people you encounter and the funny jokes you hear, but may not be able to remember. When you write down your thoughts and feelings, you become more in touch with yourself and your creativity.
2. Make a Music CD – no matter what type of music you like, you can create a ‘mix’ of your favorite songs that can reflect a certain ‘genre’ or simply be a list of all of your favorites. One of the best and most inexpensive ways is to download the individual songs for less than \$1 each and then make your mix. You can also go to your local bookstore such as Border’s or Barnes & Noble and listen to hundreds of CD’s to get an idea as to the type of songs you would like. It is a great way to put you into a different state of mind and allow you to be more creative.
3. Add a New Destination – to your day or to your business trip. If you go to a meeting in a hotel near the airport and then fly home, you won’t get the flavor of the place visited. Instead of flying out right after ‘the meeting,’ stay for an extra half-day; jump on the bus and head to the ‘old town.’ You can practice this technique while at work too. Instead of going right to your car after the workday, go and visit an interesting boutique after work. You’ll see something creative and miss the traffic.
4. Try a New Restaurant – you may not have an Afghani restaurant in your neighborhood, but look one up on the Internet or in the phone book. You’ll be surprised at how good the food is and what you might learn about another culture. You may want to try new restaurants on a regular basis. Being open to new food and new experiences will help to increase your creativity.
5. Visit an Art Exhibit – most cities now have a regular art venue such as ‘First Fridays,’ ‘Third Thursdays,’ etc. In the evenings on these days every month, most of the art galleries stay open later to showcase photography, paintings, sculpture and other forms of art. When you surround yourself with people who were inspired to do something creative, some of their creativity can’t help but rub off on you.
6. Schedule Time With Your Camera – most of us now own a digital camera. Even if you don’t have access to any sort of camera, you can easily purchase a disposable camera for less than \$12. Schedule time on a Saturday or during your lunch hour and take 24-36 photographs of something that is unique and interesting to you. Before you go, write about what you want to capture and then have fun. You’ll find that by being in a ‘photographic’ state of mind, you will start to increase your creativity.
7. Go on a Hike – this weekend, put a change of clothes in your backpack, bring plenty of water, some energy bars and start hiking. You can go on an urban hike to the nearest city or hike in a local state or National Park. Nature has a therapeutic and healing effect and greatly helps to take your mind off of your work and other challenges in your life. Nature also has a way to help us simplify our lives by making us realize that it doesn’t take much to be happy or to be creative.

*Remember: Everything we see around us once started as an idea. Yet, how can we be more creative if we aren’t practicing our creativity (if we aren’t seeing)?*