

Rediscovering Joy and Wonder: Simple Hacks to Rejuvenate Your Spirit

Published August 24, 2026

Remember the unbridled enthusiasm you felt as a child—the pure delight of discovering something new, the infectious joy of a good laugh, the timeless pleasure of play? Somewhere along the way, the responsibilities of adulthood may have dimmed that spark. But here's the beautiful truth: that capacity for wonder and joy never truly leaves us. We simply need to remember how to access it again. In this post, we'll explore practical techniques and hacks that can help you rejuvenate that sense of joy and reignite the playfulness that makes life genuinely worth living.

"The opposite of play isn't work. The opposite of play is depression." — Brian Sutton-Smith

Why Play Matters More Than Ever

Play isn't just for children. Research consistently shows that play—whether through games, humor, creative pursuits, or physical activity—is essential to our mental and physical well-being. When we engage in play, we experience reduced stress, improved cognitive function, better emotional regulation, and a genuine sense of purpose and connection. Play reminds us that life doesn't have to be serious all the time; it invites spontaneity, curiosity, and joy into our everyday moments.

For Baby Boomers, rediscovering play is particularly powerful. It combats isolation, keeps our minds sharp, strengthens our relationships, and fundamentally improves our quality of life. The trick is knowing where to start.

Practical Techniques and Hacks to Rejuvenate Joy

1. Revisit a Childhood Hobby

Whether it was drawing, painting, building, collecting, or playing an instrument, reconnect with something that once brought you joy. You don't need to be "good" at it—the joy is in the doing, not the outcome. Dust off that guitar, pick up a paintbrush, or start that model railroad you always wanted to build.

2. Schedule Regular Game Time

Board games, card games, video games designed for relaxation—these aren't frivolous pursuits. They're opportunities for connection, friendly competition, and genuine laughter. Organize a weekly game night with friends or family. The social element amplifies the joy.

3. Explore Something Completely New

Take a class. Learn a new language through an app. Try a craft you've never attempted. That sense of being a beginner again—of not knowing all the answers—is incredibly invigorating. It reignites your brain's capacity for wonder and keeps you young in spirit.

4. Embrace Playful Movement

Exercise doesn't have to be a grim obligation. Dance to your favorite songs. Take a walk in nature and look for things that capture your curiosity. Play pickleball or tennis with friends. Join a hiking group. The goal isn't perfection—it's having fun while moving your body.

5. Cultivate Laughter and Humor

Watch the comedians who make you laugh. Share funny videos or memes with friends. Tell jokes. Read humorous books. Laughter truly is medicine for the soul—it lowers stress, boosts immunity, and reminds us not to take life too seriously.

6. Create Something Just for Fun

Write a short story. Photograph things that inspire you. Cook experimental recipes. Start a small garden and try growing something unusual. The creative act itself—without pressure to produce something "worthy"—is deeply restorative.

7. Give Yourself Permission to Waste Time (Joyfully)

Some of our best moments come when we're not "being productive." Spend an afternoon browsing a museum. Sit on a bench and people-watch. Have a leisurely conversation with an old friend. These moments of seeming idleness are actually nourishing your soul.

Play is the bridge between where you are now and where you want to be. It's a reminder that this moment—right now—is worth savoring.

The Cumulative Effect

The magic of these practices is that they build on each other. One game night leads to another. One creative attempt leads to genuine interest. One laugh shared with a friend leads to deeper connection. Before you know it, you've woven joy and wonder back into the fabric of your daily life—not as occasional luxuries, but as essential elements of how you live.

The joy and wonder you felt as a child weren't dependent on age. They were expressions of your authentic self, your curiosity, and your capacity to be delighted. That capacity is still within you. It's waiting to be remembered, rekindled, and celebrated.

We Want to Hear From You!

What techniques do you use to rejuvenate joy and wonder in your life? What forms of play bring you the most happiness? We'd love to read your stories, tips, and experiences in the Comments section below. Your insights may inspire someone else to take their first step toward rediscovering the joy that's always been within reach.