

PHOTOGRAPHS: VAN CHAMPLIN / STYLING: ROSE NGUYEN



# do NOTHING

Take brief moments out of your day for downtime, and reap big benefits.

Each morning, I pour a cup of coffee and carve out a few sacred minutes to renew myself. During this time, I may solve the world's problems, or my mind may remain blank. It's not what I ponder, it's that I ponder at all.

## moments of nothingness

All of us need rejuvenation time, yet it's often the first sacrifice in our crazed schedules. Stress, day in and day out, guarantees a world of hurt and health concerns.

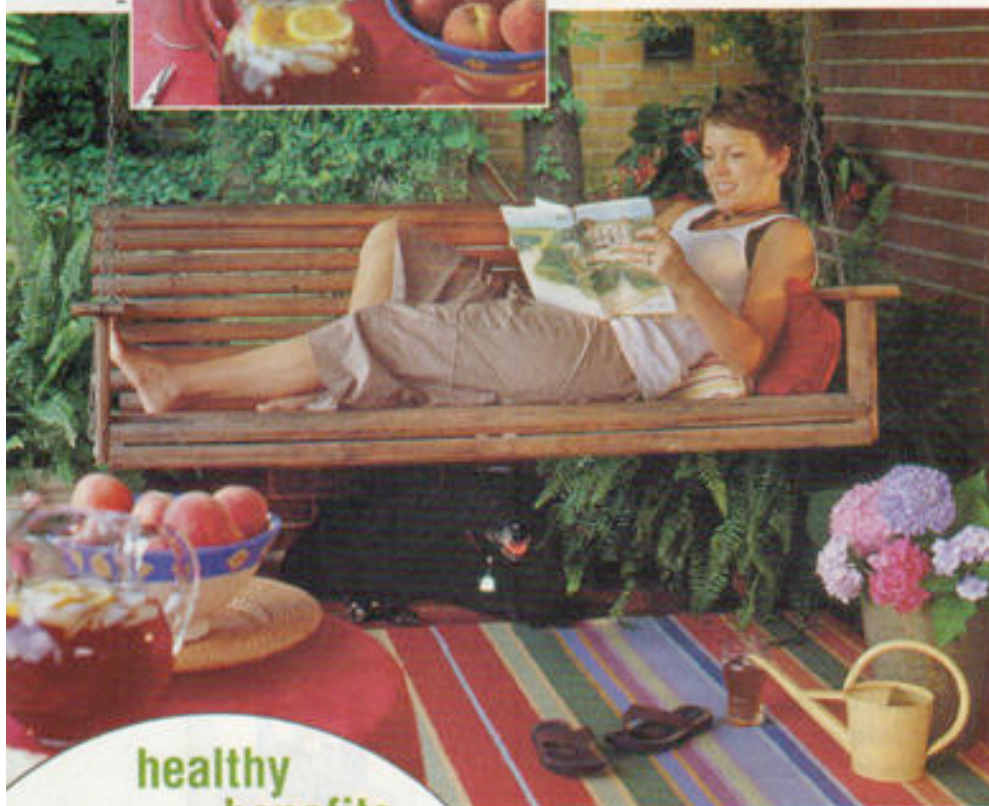
Oh ye of jam-packed days, repeat to yourself this mantra: Doing nothing is not a waste of time, selfish, or unnecessary. Instead, you're firing up brain cells, revving up creative juices, and gearing up for action. When you renew yourself, you give more to those folks in your life who depend on you. Even a brief break can be restorative and helps you cope.

Look for opportunities in your day, then make these "found" breaks habit-forming. Start with a mere 10 minutes—600 seconds a day—and build. Now take a deep breath and begin. Do nothing. Nada. Zip. Quiet your mind. Listen to your body.

I'm now devoting larger chunks of time to the pursuit of nothing. I began by collecting light-hearted films—*Sleepless in Seattle*, *You've Got Mail*, *One Fine Day*, etc. Each month, I devote a two-hour stretch to a favorite. This 120-minute investment improves my outlook for days afterward.

What's in your land of nothing? As you practice, you may find yourself expanding your healthy choices. Instead of vending machine food, you might select a piece of fruit for a snack. That moseying walk may become a rigorous hike. In fact, doing nothing could start a revolution of a wonderful something.

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## healthy benefits

- Removing yourself often from hustle and bustle during the day will improve your sleeping and eating habits. These calm periods help your body digest food and relax at bedtime.
- Exercise your brain by reading or working a crossword puzzle.
- Give yourself permission to take breaks. It reduces stress levels, calms you, and revs up your awareness and coping capacity.

"Doing nothing is not a waste of time, selfish, or unnecessary."

## a locale for replenishing

Consider establishing a place just for leisure. Your goofing-off spot can be as simple as a little-used chair in your office, a quiet corner in your home, a porch swing, or even your parked car. I once met a yoga instructor who retreated from her lively household to her own mobile, soundproof "room" for meditation. I often engage in reverie while sitting in my car in line at the bank drive-through.