

Twenty-Five Ways to Beat the Blues

by Pat Barton

Knowledge is power, knowledge is fun—and it can help send your sadness away for good.

"The best thing for being sad ... is to learn something. This has nothing to do with academic drudgery and everything to do with the fact that mastering a technique, sharpening a skill, doing something you didn't know how to do before, proves anything is possible. Here are 25 ways to brighten up your life:

1. Memorize one good joke.
2. Learn how to skate backward.
3. Teach yourself not to take the bait the next time a loved one starts pestering you.
4. Master Italian (or American Sign Language, German, Spanish, French)
5. Have a kid show you one foolproof magic trick.
6. Perfect your margarita-making technique.
7. Enroll in a bookbinding course.
8. Read everything by a single author whom you've been meaning to get to for years. Faulkner? Melville? Auden? Colette?
9. Knit yourself or someone you love a sweater—or perhaps just a scarf.
10. Start writing a [short story](#).
11. Sign up for piano lessons.
12. Find a kind of [meditation](#) (prayer, relaxation technique) that feels right.
13. Join a class you've always been interested in attending.
14. Learn how to make your grandmother's pie crust.
15. Figure out how to operate at least one feature of your cell phone, Blackberry, Tivo or iPad that you're not using, which isn't all that necessary to your actual life but is rather cool.
16. Create your own [blog](#).
17. Come up with one "[can't miss](#)" meal—and serve it to six friends.
18. Try a new kind of exercise class.
19. Conquer your revulsion at putting the worm on the hook.
20. Tennis, anyone?
21. Learn to be alone (turn off your TV and your phone, shut down your computer, and enjoy a little solitude).
22. Tango...it only takes one person to practice.
23. Buy an atlas; spend some time with it. You'll never know when Meredith Viera will call and you'll have to be a lifeline.
24. Polish your inner Joni Mitchell: Pick up the guitar you put down in tenth grade.
25. Learn to juggle ... oranges, not responsibilities.

