

Hi there, friend!

Long day at work? Kids bouncing off the walls? Your teen just wants to chill? You're exhausted from taking care of kids all day?

Sometimes at the end of the day we just feel like doing *nothing*. But, in today's world that often translates to scrolling through social media, playing mindless games on a phone, watching another YouTube video, or responding to *one last* work email. We get it!

While our devices are incredible tools and sometimes help us to de-stress, we know that families are missing out. They aren't talking as much. They aren't connecting.

Kids are losing the ability to be creative and problem solve. They don't know what boredom is! And sometimes it seems our teens don't know how to be still without a device in hand.

Sometimes we just need a little reminder to set the screen aside (parents included!), rest our minds or focus on the people around us.

But, how do we decompress without a screen? Reading is an obvious choice, and one of our favorites, but sometimes that even sounds like work.

The Better Screen Time Community has compiled some favorite screen-free activities to help you out! We've divided the list by age, but there are several ideas on each list that will work for both age groups.

We hope this helps your family to take a deep breath and look beyond a screen to unwind at the end of a long day.

Let's worry less and connect more with our kids!

Tyler, Andrea, and the BST Community

p.s. If you're looking to make some positive changes to your family's screen time, check out our online course, [Creating a Tech-Healthy Family](#). We're helping intentional parents just like you!



WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE DOING NOTHING

YOUR SCREEN-FREE CHEAT SHEET

**100+ SCREEN-FREE IDEAS TO
HELP PARENTS, KIDS, AND
TEENS GET THROUGH THE
END OF THE DAY.**



BetterScreenTime

WHEN YOU FEEL LIKE DOING *NOTHING!*

YOUR SCREEN-FREE CHEAT SHEET

IDEAS FOR KIDS

- Music and snuggles on the couch with a parent. Make a relaxing playlist.
- Enjoy a favorite snack together.
- Take a bubble bath with cups, straws, and bowls from the kitchen.
- Lie on back with arms and legs stretched out and listen to the sounds of ocean waves. (Tell your smart speaker to play ocean waves.)
- [Playaways](#) from the local library. (Simple devices with an audiobook and headphones.)
- Magazines such as [National Geographic](#). Leave these sitting out where kids will see them and rotate often.
- Make friendship bracelets. Find ideas [here](#) or [here](#) or your library. [Thread here](#).
- Listen to a podcast. A few recommendations: [Wow in the World](#), [Bedtime History](#), [Circle Round](#).
- Origami. Our kids like [this book](#) and [this one](#).
- Coloring with [Sharpies](#). (Use at your own risk!) So many parents swear by Sharpies. Kids suddenly want to color when the Sharpies come out. Print out free coloring pages. We are eyeing this [new book!](#)
- Yoga. Print out a few [simple poses](#) and do them together for ten minutes.
- Meditation. You can ask [Google](#) or [Alexa](#) to play a guided meditation from [Headspace](#).
- [Rainbow Loom](#) while listening to music or an audiobook.
- Turn on classical music and watch the fire, a lava lamp, or even the ceiling fan. If it's warm outside, find a place to watch the clouds.
- Lay in a hammock. One mom said her kids love [this one!](#)
- Look at [Chatbooks](#).
- [Paper airplanes](#). Here's a great [idea book](#).
- [Mindfulness activity](#).
- Library book rotation. Get a fresh stack of books each week!
- Paint by sticker books—like [this](#) and [this](#).
- [CD player](#) with Books on CD. Check them out at the library or find some inexpensive ones [like this](#). (We loved our Disney collection.) Or use a [simple MP3 player](#).



- "Read-a-thon" at home. Each kid goes around the house and finds a few books to put on the floor by the couch. Lay out 20+ books on the floor, gather on the couch together, and take turns picking out a book and having mom or dad read it aloud.
- Pets. Snuggling with/making houses for/talking to/walking with, etc. One mom said they have four hamsters. One per kid. It's a great way to unwind. It usually turns into building little houses with blocks or magnet tiles or legos. Very fun!
- Graphic novels. We liked this [one](#), [this one](#), and [this one](#)!

IDEAS FOR TEENS

- Take a long, hot shower.
- Listen to a podcast for teens. [Becoming—A Podcast for Teens](#) or [Fist Bump](#) are a few great ones!
- [Rubik's Cube](#). My son likes the [Smart Cube](#), too.
- Metal brain teasers. We like [this one](#).
- Graphic novels or magazines. Leave sitting out in the main living space. Easier on the brain than a book when you're feeling tired. A few parents recommend [this](#), [this](#), [this](#), and [this](#).
- Comics. My favorite as a teen was [Calvin and Hobbes](#).
- [Coloring book](#) or hand-lettering. Add some [gel pens](#) or [brush pens](#), and suddenly it's fun! Our girls like [this book](#) and [this one](#). Here's [a great coloring book](#) for the guys!
- Use [Scribd](#), [Audible](#), or [Libbi](#) (through your library) to listen to audiobooks on a smartspeaker. (Put devices across the room or in another room!)
- [Yoga](#).
- Family read-aloud. One of my favorite ways to connect as a family.
- Leave a [puzzle](#) sitting out on a table for anyone to work on during some down time. One mom keeps a puzzle on a big board that can slip under the couch. Her favorite is [this one](#). I'll be replacing [this one](#) from our house fire—we loved it.
- [3-D wooden puzzles](#) are awesome.
- Lie in a [hammock](#).
- Look at family photo albums or [Chatbooks](#).
- [Paint with watercolors](#).
- Lay on the [trampoline](#) together and talk. (One mom said a trampoline was the best investment ever. We agree! We like the 14' size.)
- One family recommends an [electronic massage chair](#) or a [foot massager](#) (or put mom or dad to work massaging teen feet or backs!).
- Subscribe to the local newspaper and leave an actual physical copy on the table.
- Draw (pull out the [Sharpies](#)!).
- Relax in recliner (blanket, lights out).
- Write poetry or an essay in your head.



WHEN YOU HAVE A *LITTLE BIT* OF ENERGY!

IDEAS FOR KIDS

- Build a fort.
- [Legos](#).
- Go on a hike.
- Put on a play.
- [Make slime](#).
- Have a baking contest. *British Baking Show* anyone?
- Play an instrument.
- Make something out of a giant cardboard box.
- Write a letter to a pen pal or cousin.
- Jump on the trampoline.
- Bake together (even if it's a quick box mix!).
- Go on a walk in your neighborhood or a favorite spot in your hometown with a family member.
- [Playdough](#) with plastic utensils and cookie cutters.
- [Snap Circuits](#).
- [Magna-Tiles](#).
- Use your gym membership to go in the hot tub or swim.
- Build with toothpicks and marshmallows.
- Go to the library for a free kids class.
- Turn up the music and have a dance party.
- Have [craft supplies ready](#): glue gun, googly eyes, beads, pipe cleaners, artificial flowers, buttons, glitter glue, markers, paint, etc. We love [the Artful Parent](#) for simple, fun craft ideas.
- Cookbooks for kids! Kids can learn and help prep dinner. We love [this one](#) and [this one](#) recommended by *Mel's Kitchen Cafe*.
- Do an activity book. We [like this one!](#)
- Simple [card games](#).
- Kiwi Crates. A subscription box for every age. We love these! [Click here](#) and use the code SHARE30 for 30% off your first month.

IDEAS FOR TEENS

- Build a [model airplane](#) or a [snap tight model](#) car for beginners. Or get one that [actually flies like this!](#)
- [Launch a rocket](#).
- Go outside and throw a football, play catch, or play some hoops.
- Games! Favorites include: [Telestrations](#), [CodeNames](#), and [Tenzi](#). Invite some friends over to play.



- [Organize a drawer](#) or bedroom.
- Play an instrument. Sit down at the piano or strum a favorite tune on the guitar.
- Go on a bike ride.
- Find old mechanical things like a radio from a thrift store to take apart and reconfigure.
- Quadcopters. Tyler would tell you to get [this basic one](#) or [this one with goggles](#). (If you get two, they can be fun flying with a friend or sibling!)
- Fix something around the house with a parent or friend.
- Practice photography skills on a real camera.
- Go on a walk or a run.
- [Ping pong](#) on your kitchen table!
- [Gator Skin Dodgeballs](#). In the yard or a nearby gym.
- Ride bikes to the gas station to buy a snack.
- Self care — [lotion](#), [sand or soak feet](#), [trim](#) or [paint fingernails/toenails](#), [face mask](#), [deep condition hair](#).
- Write thank you cards.
- Do chores for money.
- Call a grandparent! Surprise them and ask them how they are doing. They would love to hear your voice.
- Learn to sew on a button or iron.
- Ding-dong ditch a neighbor and leave a kind surprise.
- Write in your [journal](#). [This is a fun take](#) on a regular journal.
- Have you tried the [Wreck-It Journal](#)? My daughter loved it.
- [Crochet](#) or [cross-stitch](#).
- Keep [dominoes](#) or [playing cards](#) in a basket where it's easily accessible!
- Build something: a birdhouse, a picnic table (my nephew built a ski-jump! Ask your mom first.) ;)
- [Sudoku](#) or [crossword puzzle](#).
- Have a [Nerf gun war](#).
- Brainstorm business ideas.
- Plan and prepare your favorite meal.
- Learn a [new hairstyle](#) or [braids](#).
- Learn [how to juggle](#) or do [yo-yo tricks](#).
- Try out the Eureka Crate for teens. Lots of amazing hands-on projects! [Click here](#) and use the code SHARE30 for 30% off your first month.
- Make a kid-friendly escape room for your siblings.
- What did you used to love to do as a young kid? Go do it!

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