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Do You Really Enjoy Being A Couch Potato?

Some people just get up, go to work, come home, grab a bite, then sit down and vegetate in front of the TV set. Do you do the same? Do you like being a couch potato? Don't you think there's more than that to life?

Godbey and Robinson wrote in their recent book *Time for Life* that people in the States are spending more and more time doing leisure activities. According to them, Americans now spend around 40 hours a week doing leisure-time activities. And according to statistics on the top 5 leisure activities among Americans, watching TV ranks first. So if you want to be a couch potato, that's your choice. There are, however, many rewarding pursuits out there that you might both be interested in and have the time for. Here we talk about three of them.

Roller coasting has been very popular with the majority of people and now we have ACE (American Coaster Enthusiasts) which is an organization that preserves, appreciates, and enjoys roller coasters. The first roller coaster was built in Russia and then over time moved its way to America and a lot of them were built in America. They fell out of fashion for a while but then Walt Disney gave them a second life and they became popular again.

The second pursuit is orienteering. It's basically a combination of map reading and cross-country skiing or running. Orienteers have a compass and a map and they have some control points on the map. What they need to do is go and find those points and have their cards stamped. Orienteering is popular because it's both interesting and healthy. It also helps you with your mental acumen.

The next pastime is letterboxing. It's a combination of orienteering and treasure hunting. It began in England in 1854. Here is how to do it: People put a notebook and a rubber stamp in a bottle and give clues for finding the bottle. Participants will follow the clues and hike in the English countryside to find the bottle and stamp their notebook.

With all the three in mind, do you still prefer to sit home and be a couch potato? Do you want to be passive or go out and do something actively? What if in the future we start engraving our hobbies on tombstones? Which would look better: JOHN L. DOE, COUCH POTATO or JOHN L. DOE, ORIENTEER?

1. Who is a couch potato?

A couch potato is a person who spends a lot of time in front of the TV and is not active at all.

2. What do Godbey and Robinson state in their recent book?

They state that the average amount of time that Americans have to devote to leisure activities is actually increasing.

3. How many hours a week do Americans spend doing leisure-time activities now according to Godbey and Robinson?

They spend 40 hours a week doing leisure-time activities.

4. What is the most popular leisure-time activity among Americans?

Watching TV at 15.0 hours a week, is by far the most popular leisure-time activity among Americans.

5. Can you name three rewarding pursuits out there instead of watching TV?

Yes, Roller coasting, orienteering, and letterboxing are three rewarding pursuits out there.

6. What does ACE stand for and what does it do?

It stands for American Coaster Enthusiasts and it is dedicated to preserving, appreciating, and enjoying roller coasters.

7. Where were the first mechanical roller coasters constructed?

They were constructed in Russia.

8. How did roller coasters begin to make a comeback?

They became popular again with Walt Disney's opening of the first Disneyland.

9. Who has ridden on most of the roller coasters in the States?

Marie Miller, a member of ACE, has ridden on most of the roller coasters in the States.

10. What is orienteering?

It's a combination of map reading and cross-country skiing or running.

11. What should orienteers do?

They should try to follow the map by interpreting it carefully and using a compass to plot their course.

12. How is orienteering useful?

It taxes both your physical strength and your mental acumen.

13. What is letterboxing?

That's a combination of orienteering and treasure hunting.

14. What do participants have to do in letterboxing?

They have to follow the clues by hiking until they finally locate the letterbox and stamp their notebook.

15. Why are roller coaster, orienteering, and letterboxing so popular?

One principal reason is that they're basically active, not passive.