



# Play

What's Your Style

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As adults, we often forget to play. Responsibilities like work, chores, and parenting take priority, and play becomes an afterthought—if we consider it at all. Yet, the **absence of play** impacts us **mentally, physically, and emotionally**, influencing our mood, creativity, and relationships.

## Why Play Matters

Play is essential across the lifespan. It fosters:

- Joy and connection
- Emotional regulation and resilience
- Learning and adaptability
- Social bonding and creativity

When we neglect play, we miss out on these vital benefits.

As time becomes limited and the opportunities for self-care and hobbies become challenging to experience. It's important to make time for self-care and it's important to make time to play as an adult. Often, when those free moments and opportunities arise, it can be difficult to decide “what to do?”

In a relationship date night may not be the answer for every couple. Therefore, it could be worth your time to test/learn new ways to play together as a couple.

Included below are a series of prompts to consider the **types of play** as well as your style of play. Or said another way – your **play personality**.

Finally, several “play” suggestions have been provided towards the latter part of this document.

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## Rediscovering Play as an Adult - I invite you to **reflect on how you prefer to play**.

As we mature, we often develop a *play style*—a unique way we most comfortably express our playful energy. Most people have **one dominant play personality** and one or two supporting styles.

Be curious. Tinker with different types of play. The more diverse your play experiences, the richer your life becomes. If one style feels dull, switch it up. And if your friends play differently—**try out their style!** It may surprise you.

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## Types of Play: What Resonates with You?

**Attunement Play** - Engaging in eye contact, smiling, or gentle touch creates joyful connection. This type of play supports early bonding and remains powerful across all ages.

**Body & Movement Play** - Movement stimulates brain regions tied to learning, adaptability, and creativity. Whether it's dancing, walking, or even stretching — movement can trigger a play state.

**Object Play** - There's joy in physically engaging with objects—solving puzzles, building Legos, or tossing a paper wad into a trash can. It's about interacting with the world around you.

**Imaginative Play** - Imagination fuels our ability to innovate and dream. Imaginative play nourishes our spirit and creativity.

**Social Play** - From peek-a-boo to dinner parties, humans bond through shared experiences. Social play builds communication and emotional intelligence.

**Rough-and-Tumble Play** - This includes friendly physical interaction—play fighting, tickling, or shouting with excitement. It's a natural form of expression and connection.

**Celebratory & Ritual Play** - Think birthdays, holidays, religious observances—ritualized play builds meaning and strengthens social ties.

**Storytelling & Narrative Play** - Stories shape our understanding of the world. Engaging in narrative—whether telling stories or listening—can create a timeless sense of joy and immersion.

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## What's Your Play Personality?

Here are eight common **Play Personality Types**. Which one feels most like you?

**The Storyteller** - Fueled by imagination, the storyteller finds joy in weaving drama into everyday life. A tennis match becomes an epic saga; a walk, a fairytale journey.

**The Kinesthetic** - Movement is essential for this playful soul. Kinesthetic feel most alive when they're in motion—dancing, running, or simply moving through space.

**The Joker** - Always ready with a joke or silly face, jokers find joy in humor. Play for them is about laughter, levity, and shared smiles.

**The Explorer** - Explorers seek out new experiences. They find play in travel, deep conversations, music, research, or emotional depth.

**The Director** - Directors love to plan, organize, and execute events. They enjoy orchestrating fun experiences for others and thrive when making things happen.

**The Creator/Artist** - The joy is in the making—whether it's art, crafts, gardening, or problem-solving. For creators, play is about bringing something new into existence.

**The Competitor** - The thrill of play is found in winning. Games, sports, and keeping score give structure and excitement to their playful nature.

**The Collector** - Collectors enjoy acquiring and organizing—whether it's rare items, stamps, or meaningful experiences. Their play lies in the hunt and the curation.

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## **“Play” Suggestions:**

You may not consider the following as typical ways to "play", in the traditional sense, although the objective is to interact with one another in different ways to demonstrate and instill a belief that "we can" play and "we can" enjoy and "we can" work together.

Try one or all of these. Start simple, at first schedule one of them, and test/learn what appeals to you and what doesn't.

### **Share a moment of focus together**

- Pick a reasonable sized jigsaw puzzle, backgammon, mancala, or board game and set it up somewhere you can both take a few minutes each day over the course of a week or so to connect and try to put some pieces together or play a few rounds...Link: [How to play Mancala](#)

### **Share a vision together**

- Pick a "paint by numbers" portrait available at your local retailer and spend some time painting together. Painting by numbers makes the process much easier for the "non-artist" while also allowing one to tap into that creative side. Painting together allows the both of you an opportunity to share a vision together... Link: [Example paint by numbers - Bob Ross](#)

### **Share a meal or sweet treat together**

- Pick a mutual meal/dessert that you both enjoy and work together to create it. Then, share it with each other, or better yet feed each other! Savor the moment together...

### **Check the "box" together**

- Identify a "to do" or a "repair" around the house that needs to be taken care of and then both of you work together to knock it out. Find the solution on YouTube, Google it, etc. Regardless of size, the idea is to work together, and demonstrate we can "solve" problems together...

### **Get "zen" together**

- Find your zen together by learning a simple Qi Gong/Tai Chi ritual. It offers the opportunity to learn something new together as well as introduce a mind/body experience that can add a way to calm and relax the body. Link: [Qi Gong Exercise](#)

### **Tie a knot together**

- Take the opportunity to learn how to knit together. If you have past experience doing it, then teach your partner. If you both have never knitted, then take the opportunity to learn and enjoy the process of producing something such as a scarf or beanie hat. Link: [How to knit](#)

### **Try to JOMO together**

- Personal calendars and family or social obligations can become overwhelming. As a counterbalance to the stress, anxiety, or exhaustion that may accompany those "should's" or "have to's" try to JOMO. Try playing with the idea of experiencing the *Joy Of Missing Out*! Try cancelling, postponing, or simply just not doing something that was planned. Feel how "free-ing" it may be to open up some space to slow down, do nothing, sit and be still, or do something that truly brings you joy together...

### **Take a risk together**

- Work together to take a risk, for example, if possible identify a stock or investment to purchase and agree on how "risky" you want to be with the investment. Keep it simple, say \$100 dollars - if available, and work through the process of agreeing on taking a risk!

### **Have a laugh together**

- Identify a show, a video clip, a comedian, or recall an instance where both of you share a deep and enjoyable belly laugh together. Link: [Try not to laugh](#)

### **Build it, Blow It, Bang It together**

- Identify an industrial trade class that you both can learn how to build or weld something, blow some glass art, or bang out some iron work. Link: [Hazard Factory](#)

### **Learn how to "Niksen"**

- Doing nothing is a skill. If you don't believe that statement, try it. Sit or lay down for 5 minutes and do nothing. Just be...If you find it difficult to not think about doing the laundry, or taking the car to get serviced, or check the "ding" from your phone updates taunting you then you may consider learning how the Dutch practice *Niksen*...Link: [Explanation of Niksen](#)

### **Stare at each other**

- Come together and connect through something as simple as looking at one another. This activity can be a tremendously intimate experience. Sit or stand apart from one another and stare at each other without talking. Start by trying to do it for 30 seconds at a comfortable distance...Then, progress to 60 seconds and move closer...Finally, go for 90 seconds as close as you can be...Or, if you're daring, try 4 minutes like the video link below. Link: [Staring Exercise](#)

### **Get dirty together**

- Literally, get your hands dirty together. Plant something in the yard or a simple herb box, clean out a closet, clean the oven, or even clean out the toilet to demonstrate you're both willing to do the dirty work for/with one another...

### **Aim to hit a bullseye together**

- Find a local spot where you can throw axes or shoot a bow and arrow! Challenge each other to hit the bullseye. Throwing axes and shooting a bow take a balance of self awareness, relaxed breathing, and being intentional. Actions that contribute towards a healthy relationship. Take the opportunity to practice throwing an axe while also working on skills that can enhance your connection. Link: [Axe Throwing](#)

### **Get clean together**

- Take an opportunity to wash each other's feet. It's a humbling and intimate experience and the feet have many sensory receptors which can stimulate a calming sensation. It is also an oddly vulnerable experience having one's feet washed/cleaned...

### **Make a mixed tape together**

- Take some time together to sit down and create a mutual playlist that is a compilation of songs that you both enjoy and resonate with. Then, when tensions rise in the house or things are going sideways, turn it on and turn it up to disrupt the energy and provide some relief through sounds that resonate with both of you...

### **Tinker together**

- Create a space where you can "tinker" together with unfinished projects, hobbies, crafts, arts, etc. Agree on how much can be left out so that the space doesn't become overwhelming. Consider these "tinker" activities as slightly challenging "things" that you may normally discard, outsource, or not have the time or patience to explore, repair, or refurbish. When you need to "connect" take some time to tinker and try to fix a broken "thing" or "replace" a part on one of the "things" or touch up the paint on the "thing." The objective is to make space and time for both of you to explore, help one another, and "tinker" together! Link: [Instructables](#)

### **Be quiet together**

- Find a green space or bench in nature and sit together. No talking. Just sit. Be quiet together. Do this for 5 minutes at first. Then try 10 minutes. Maybe work up to 20 minutes. Just sit and be together. Then, take some time to share what you experienced. If you'd like to take it a step further, try a sensory deprivation tank to truly be quiet...Link: [Float Seattle](#)

### **Try to "hue-gah" together**

- Look around your space and identify a spot or a room, inside or out, where you can create a comfortable and cozy setting. Remove distractions and unnecessary stimulation such as electronics, etc. The objective is to create a safe environment for warmth, intimacy, connection, and togetherness. "Hygge" or "Koselig" is a practice woven into the Dutch and Norwegian culture. Once you've set up your space then practice some "hue-gah" with your partner, friends, and family! Link: [Understand Hygge](#)

### **Take a plunge together**

- Find a lake or river and safely jump in! Don't think about it, just grab hands and take a leap together. Then, enjoy warming up together!

### **Push a broom together**

- Put on your jacket and grab a broom! It's time to push the stone and curl together. Explore the opportunity to learn how to curl. It's one of the most watched winter Olympic events, therefore, why not give it a try? It's a great way to practice working together and playing together. Link: [Granite Curling](#)

### **Try to KenKen together**

- Take an opportunity to challenge your minds as a team and work to solve a puzzle together. Many times two minds are better than one! Link: [KenKen](#)

### **Try letting go**

- Have some fun together and see how much "stuff" you can round up and give away. Set a stretch goal, such as 100 items each! Can you each clean out your own closet and give up that much? Who will be first? What will it be? E.g., surplus clothing, skis in the corner, that treadmill or exercise bike, worn out shoes, the Tupperware drawer, stacks of magazines, unused furniture, old books, "knick knacks" from high school, old bedding, etc. Take some time to declutter your surroundings giving you the opportunity to focus more on what matters. Each other...

### **Try Swaddling**

- Are you both feeling stressed? Overwhelmed by responsibilities? Take a few minutes to try some adult "swaddling" and wrap each other up in a burrito! Take the time to lay together and just rest – experience the warmth and comfort together. Link: [Burrito Wrap Technique](#)

### **Stretch it Out together**

- Take 15 minutes to connect by making time to stretch out the body and loosen up the muscles and tension that may exist at the end or beginning of the day. Stretching together offers a way to connect, loosen up, and be with one another while doing a restorative activity that will enable you to make time for yourself and those you are with! Link: [15 Minute Stretch](#)

### **Get Competitive together**

- Learn Washington State's official sport – Pickleball! It's easy to learn, low equipment costs, and a lot of opportunities to meet others, beat others, and enjoy one another. Check out places to play. Link: [Places to Play Pickleball](#)

### **Find A Hidden Garden together**

- Washington State offers several hidden and beautiful gardens. Take a drive and then take a stroll through nature and connect with the beauty that surrounds you while also connecting with each other. Link: [Washington State Hidden Gardens](#)

### **Forage together**

- There are several outdoor activities that don't require running shoes or a tent. One of them is mushroom foraging. Washington state offers several climate zones that lend to experiencing this outstanding activity that both gets you out in nature as well as offers the novelty of "treasure" hunting for these elusive gems! Link: [Forage for Mushrooms](#)

### **Go Round & Round together**

- Visit the velodrome at Marymoor Park and take part in or just watch the cyclist race against themselves and against one another. Link: [Jerry Baker Velodrome](#)

### **Get Silent together at a local monastery**

- There is tremendous energy that can be experienced when you visit one of the many local monastery's in the greater Seattle area. If you have never experienced the culture, warmth, and acceptance of a monastery then please add it to your list of experiences. Link: [Sakya Monastery](#)

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**Play More. Stress Less. Connect Deeper.**

Play is not a luxury—it's a necessity. So, take a moment today to ask yourself:

**What's my play style? How can I invite more of it into my life this week?**

No matter what your age, you *deserve* joy, creativity, and meaningful connection. Let play lead the way.