

30 Phrases to Talk about your Free Time

In this lesson, I am going to show you lots of cool phrases so you can talk naturally about what you do in your free time.

I will also show you how to use advanced adverbs and different tenses so you can talk about your hobbies confidently and get a high score on your IELTS Speaking test.

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Different Types of Free Time Activities

There are many types of free time activities. Sometimes we call these leisure activities, or hobbies and pastimes.

Here are some of the most common types of activities with some examples.

Indoor Activities

Playing games

Reading

Watching TV / Films

Chilling out / hanging out with friends

Outdoor Activities

Sports (e.g. swimming, jogging, football)

Gardening

Traveling

Going shopping

It's true, some of these may take place both indoors and outdoors, depending on the context. For example, shopping in a street market is outdoors, but shopping in a mall is indoors.

Collecting things

Stamps

Coins

NFTs (Non-fungible tokens)

Creative activities

Playing a musical instrument

Knitting

Painting

Taking photos

Talking About Your Hobbies

So, how can you talk about what you do in your free time?

Well here are some common and also more advanced phrases to help you talk about your hobbies.

I get up to a lot things

I don't get up to much

*To **get up to** = to do an activity*

Of course, it is always better to say something and describe an activity you do, rather than say, 'I don't have any hobbies'.

The most common way to talk about a hobby is

I like to do yoga

I like doing yoga

What's the difference between 'like doing' and 'like to do'?

We can use both to express enjoyment.

When I say, 'I like doing yoga' the focus is *always* on my enjoyment of the activity.

However, if I say, 'I like to do yoga' this can *also* mean that I am describing either a choice or a habit

For example,

I like to do yoga on Thursdays

This focusses on the fact that I choose to do it on Thursdays, not any other day, or that I have the habit of practicing on Thursdays.

Here are some more useful expressions to describe hobbies you love.

I'm fond of playing video games

I'm into playing video games

I'm passionate about playing video games

Learning tip: When a verb follows a preposition it must
be a gerund (verb+ing)!

If you are less serious about doing a hobby and it is something you do casually, not seriously, you can say...

I like to **dabble** in cooking

I like to **dabble** in painting

Sometimes, I **dabble** in investing

I play the guitar, but I am just **an aficionado**

I play the guitar, but I am just **an amateur**

Adverbs to Talk About Your Free Time Activities

When talking about your hobbies, you can also go into more detail and say how often you do it, using different frequency adverbs.

Here are some simple ones

I **regularly** paint

I **often** paint

I **frequently** paint

Here are some more advanced ones

I paint **whenever I can**

I paint **as often as I can**

I paint **whenever I get a chance**

I don't paint **as much as I would like**

I don't **get round to** painting **as much as I would like**

Different Tenses to Describe Your Hobbies

IELTS SpeakingTip: To sound more sophisticated and to get a higher score in IELTS, use different tenses in your answers.

Below you can see how we can use different tenses when talking about your free time activities.

Present Simple

I **paint**

I recently **took up painting**

I **am** quite new to it

To **take up** a hobby = to start a hobby

Past Simple

I **started** painting years ago

I **decided** to **have a go** at painting

I **decided** to **try my hand** at painting

To **have a go at** something = to try something new

To **try my hand at** something = to try something new

Present Perfect Continuous

I've been painting **for as long as I can remember**

I've been painting **for donkey's years**

For donkey's years = for a long time

The Benefits of Having Hobbies

There are many benefits to having a hobby.

These commonly include that it lets you relax, stay healthy or socialise.

Here are some useful verbs meaning **to relax**

- To unwind
- To chill out
- To disconnect
- To kick back
- To let your hair down

Here are some useful verbs meaning **to stay healthy**

- To get into shape
- To stay in shape
- To keep healthy
- To get fit

Here are some useful verbs meaning **to socialise**

- To hang out with friends
- To chill out with friends
- To be with family
- To meet up with friends

Here are some templates you can use to describe these benefits

- It helps me _____
- It just helps me _____

- I find that it helps me _____
- It allows me to (just) _____

It helps me **unwind**

It just helps me **kick back**

I find that it helps me **stay in shape**

It allows me to **meet up with friends**

- It's a nice way to _____
- It's a great way to _____

It's a nice way to socialise

It's a great way to get close to nature

Finally, here are some more great expressions to talk about the relaxing benefits of having a hobby

It **has a calming effect**

It's really **therapeutic**

It's a great **stress buster**

So, now you can talk confidently about your hobby, how often you do it, as well as describing the benefits.

Now it's your turn, leave a comment below and tell me about your hobby!

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