

Ten Things I Haven't Done in 6-10 Years

by

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1. Use a zipper. Zippers are ubiquitous in our lives, from the flies of our jeans to tents or backpacks. It's tricky to imagine a world without zippers, but it's even trickier to imagine living in a world where zippers exist, but I can't use them.
2. Answer a Phone. Most people would consider this a blessing. I remember there were apps that would automatically send certain calls straight to voice mail so that you would never have to answer calls from that person. Maybe it's a control thing. Someone is calling you and if you answer, you're at their beck and call. You're the one who wasn't busy enough to justify NOT answering the phone, so it falls on you to also respond to whatever whim or request they may put forth. People calling at dinner time was always an issue at our house – and of course during movies. I haven't answered a phone in 9 years now and I do appreciate the freedom it gives me. Hearing a phone ring, I no longer jump for my phone, because I know it's not for me.
3. Take a Bath. Let's be frank. I shower every other day. But I used to take luxurious bubble baths in my 6' jetted garden tub, sometimes with bubbles or scented oils and tons of candles. I would read books for hours, having to run additional hot water every so often to keep the temperature up. I also discovered that if I put my iPad into a large Ziplock bag, I could use that to watch movies in my tub, so binge-festing on NetFlix was also a lavish and wrinkling experience.

4. Kiss a lover on the lips. Being single sucks, but being interested in someone and not being able to express that love physically is very difficult. I give my mom chaste kisses on the cheek, but I have not had a real good tonsil-tickling mouth-hockey game in many years, and I miss it. I can't believe it, but I miss it so much I now fantasize and dream about a simple kiss more than sex.
5. Walk Barefoot on the Grass. I remember my first time at summer camp, I was so excited to be able to go barefoot EVERYWHERE. Then we were told that for safety (and liability) reasons we were required to wear shoes or sandals at all times – unless we were in the water. Ironically, at remote camp sites, the water was often full of submerged obstacles, sharp stones and rotted branches... so I learned to wear AquaSox even while swimming.
6. Drive a Car. I know what you're thinking – it must be great to have people chauffer you around everywhere. I remember when I was just starting out as an actor and I had to pay for my own limousine service... it was something new and fun and cool. I could invite my friends along with me and we could share an experience. I had a contract with the limo company and even had a preferred driver (██████████). Permanent designated driver, I never had to worry about parking, traffic, accidents, gas, repairs or insurance.
7. Smoke My Pipe. I have a tattoo of a bear smoking a pipe on my arm, so giving up smoking was very difficult to do. There are days that I crave the taste of pipe tobacco, even the smell of burning leaves in the fall can bring on the craving. I know I'm better off health-wise having given up smoking, but for me it was a relaxing and peaceful experience. I could pretend that my lungs are grateful that I haven't smoked in 9 years,

but you don't inhale a pipe, so I don't think they really notice that much. My clothes do smell better though.

8. Own more than 3 pairs of pants. I have always wanted to live in a tiny house. My hero is Henry David Thoreau. I named my company "Walden" and read books on simple living and downsizing and living off the land. One of the keys to that is not owning more than you need. And when you really stop to think of it, how many pairs of shoes can you wear at once? Did I really need an entire walk-in closet full of clothes? When I'm honest with myself, I realize I usually only wore my "favorites" of everything and only wore my "second string" clothes when I didn't do laundry and needed something to wear. But when you only own 3 pairs of pants, it's easier make sure I do laundry every week (instead of procrastinating until it becomes a monumental task). We can all do to downsize most everything in our lives, but possessions are just things... we can learn to live with less.

9. Lick a Stamp. When I was a kid, I collected stamps. I probably have my old stamp collection around somewhere. I wonder what it's worth? I remember when I opened my company, I did most things on email, but I still had a roll of 100 stamps in a special plastic dispenser just for sending out payments. Then I got a bank account that actually printed and mailed my checks for me, and I even was able to print my own mailing labels or stamps – saving me the time of having to run to the post office for stamps and the taste of having to lick those damn things. Of course, stamps had gone to self-adhesive by that time, but it was the principle of the thing. I don't think I've licked a stamp (or affixed a self-adhesive stamp) for a letter in nearly 10 years. I don't know why

I think that's such a loss, but I miss it. The simplicity of attaching a stamp that would not only deliver my message but also have a potential second forever life in some young boy's stamp collection.

10. Have more than 2 choices for dinner. When I'm eating out with Mom, she's notorious for changing her mind (multiple times) about what to order. The wait staff always takes it in good stride, but she'll bounce back and forth between several choices, before finally (temporarily) settling on one, only to change it once the wait staff have written the order down. Sometimes Mom changes it even after the order has been placed. This is just Mom being Mom. I remember those days, a whole menu was provided and I could pick anything I wanted off of it. I could even add extras of things I liked and subtract things I didn't like. We could also share food. That's the worst rule in prison, just enacted last year. We're not allowed to share any of our tray with anyone else. Even if they're hungry and I'm not. Even if you're allergic to it or hate it (like Pea soup). So having two choices for meals is nice – it makes things go faster in the line. But I do wish we could share our food. And I can't wait for my 10 year sentence to be finished so I can go out to a restaurant with Mom and be able to complain about her changing her mind multiple times. That thought brings a smile to my face.