

The Ranch Report

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3 Fun Activities To Do with Your Family This Thanksgiving

By MarLee Berry, TexasHillCountry.com

The turkey and trimmings have all been devoured and put away, but your family is here to stay for at least a few more hours. Right about now you might be thinking it is time to succumb to the usual post-Thanksgiving feast food coma or lay around the living room watching football. However, it may be a rare event when family members all come together, making this the most opportune time to participate in a few fun activities instead of just watching the back of your eyelids.

If you are stumped for ideas that can get both the young and the young at heart involved, then look no further than these three amusing activities that are sure to be remembered for many Thanksgivings to come.

1. Share Your Favorite Thanksgiving Memory

Over the years, your family has probably made some wonderful Thanksgiving memories and this activity is the perfect way to get everyone talking. Old Uncle Hank may dig in his heels if you expect him to do too much on a full stomach, but he probably won't pass up a chance to share his thoughts with an attentive audience. Start with the oldest family member and work your way down through the generations. For added fun, after someone shares a story see if everyone can recount all the tales told up to that point. As a final touch, be sure to get your video camera out to record the whole scene. A few years from now it will be nice to listen to Grandma reminisce about her childhood memories.

2. Play a Game of "Who Am I?"

There are different ways to go about playing this game, but however you choose to do it, this activity is a great way to get your family moving



while creating hilarious Thanksgiving memories. Here are two ways you can choose to play:

- Write the name of each family member on a sticky note. Then, mix them up and place the sticky notes on everyone's forehead, making sure no one receives their own name. See who can guess their identity the fastest by asking questions that can only be answered with a simple "yes" or "no."
- This version is much like charades, except you only use the names of your fellow family members. After writing everyone's name on a slip of paper, mix them up and draw them one by one out of a jar. You can split up into teams, or keep individual scores. Everyone takes a turn pretending to be another relative. Remember, no talking!

3. Start a Backyard Game

Now that everyone has gotten warmed up, it is time to move outside if the weather permits. Whether you channel your inner Houston Astro in a game of baseball, or take the football off the screen and into the backyard, the focus is less on winning and more on spending time together. If needed, nominate an elderly family member to keep score but don't leave them out of the fun, after all, Grandma's touchdown dance may just become a treasured Thanksgiving Day recollection.

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Traditional Homemade Stuffing

This simple homemade stuffing is perfect for weeknight dinners or the holidays!

Author: Liz Fourez, lovegrowswild.com

Ingredients

- 1 pound firm white bread, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 2 tablespoons unsalted butter
- 2 cups onion, finely diced
- 2 cups celery, finely diced
- 2½ cups low-sodium chicken broth, divided
- ¼ cup fresh parsley, chopped
- 2 teaspoons poultry seasoning
- ½ teaspoon salt
- ½ teaspoon black pepper
- 2 large eggs

Instructions

Preheat oven to 250°F. Place the bread cubes in a single layer on baking sheets and bake for 1 hour, stirring occasionally. Set aside and allow the bread to cool.

Melt the butter in a large skillet over medium heat. Add the onion and celery and cook for 10 minutes, stirring occasionally, until the vegetables are tender and almost golden. Scrape the vegetables and butter into an extra large bowl and add the cooled bread cubes, parsley, poultry seasoning, salt, pepper and 1¼ cup of the chicken broth. In a small bowl, whisk the 2 eggs and the remaining 1¼ cup chicken broth until combined and pour into the bowl of stuffing. Gently mix the stuffing until all the ingredients are completely combined and place in a buttered 13x9-inch baking dish. Cover the dish with foil and bake for 30 minutes. Then remove the foil and bake for another 25-35 minutes until the center is set and the top is golden brown and crisp.



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3 Ways To Better Manage the Time You Spend on Social Media

by MarLee Berry , texashillcountry.com/lifestyle



In recent years, the use of social media platforms around the world has skyrocketed. With the click of a button or the swipe of a screen, you can be connected to friends and family across the world. Technological advances in the last decade have enabled us to keep

abreast of current events, celebrity lifestyles, and just about any other subject you can imagine, all with the use of one little device.

However, as amazing as this technology is, it has the potential to distract us from accomplishing our goals. In fact, during a study conducted by Dscout, individuals touched their phones an average of 2,617 times per day. All these touches culminated into an average time of just over two hours spent on a smartphone for the typical user.

If you are one of those who finds yourself constantly fighting the urge to check your phone or update social media, do not worry. There are a number of ways to increase your productivity and manage the time you spend plugged-into your favorite apps. Here, we have listed three tools that will have you setting aside time for the important things sooner rather than later.

1. The BreakFree App

A great way to see if you are spending too much time on your phone is by tracking your app usage. The BreakFree app, created for both Apple and Android operating systems, is a great way to accomplish this. According to Inc.com, this app not only tells you everytime you unlock your phone, it breaks down the entirety of

(Continued on Page 6)

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Sherry Salkhordeh O.D.

November is Diabetes Awareness Month

by Andrea Gabrick

Follow these tips to stay at your peak!

1. Say "Om"

Learn to meditate to help reduce stress and improve your blood sugar levels.

2. Step Out

Exercise helps keep your weight and blood sugar under control, and just about everyone can do a brisk daily walk.

3. Eat Right

Follow your food plan. If you don't have one, ask your doctor about seeing a dietitian who specializes in diabetes.

4. Jet Set

Before you hit the road, get a checkup, pack extra meds, and plan your doses around time zone changes.

5. Hang 10

Drop 10% of your body weight through diet and exercise.

6. Trade Up

Swap saturated fats and refined sugar for healthy fats in nuts and sweet whole fruit.

7. See Clearly

Diabetes complications can cause vision loss or blindness. Schedule a full eye exam at least once a year.

8. Stand Up

You may not feel foot injuries, so check both feet daily for blisters, cuts, or sores.

9. Show Color

Pack your plate with a palette of greens, yellows, and reds -- like spinach, squash, and tomatoes.

10. Learn More

Visit WebMD's Diabetes Center for news, tips, a blood sugar tracker, and more.

Expert Tips on Living With Diabetes

Tips from Adrian Vella, MD, endocrinologist, Mayo Clinic, Rochester, Minn.

- Use the web or your smartphone to help you manage what you eat. Online tools can help you keep track of your calorie consumption, aid in meal planning, and provide important nutrition information to help you make healthy choices.
- Get a pedometer. People with diabetes need to exercise. For many of my patients, that means walking. Set a goal.

Tips from Deborah J. Wexler, MD, assistant professor of medicine, Harvard Medical School, and co-clinical director, Massachusetts General Hospital Diabetes Unit.

- Diabetes can be discouraging. You may feel sad, anxious, or depressed for no apparent reason. Get support, and you will be better able to meet the challenges.

- Portion control is key. Plate the amount of food you intend to eat, and don't go back for seconds.

Tips from Samuel Andrews II, MD, endocrinologist, Ochsner Medical Center, New Orleans, and co-author of The New Sugar Busters.

- Choose foods that won't boost your blood sugar. That means eating brown or basmati rice and whole wheat bread and pasta. Skip juices and eat whole fruits and fiber.
- Daily exercise helps control your weight and blood sugar levels. Each day, hop on a bike, go for a swim, or take a walk.



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RANCH REPORT

Ten Steps for Winterizing Your Home

by Julie Waidelich

With winter fast approaching, it's time to prepare your home for the freezing temperatures. Winterizing your home will go a long way in protecting what is most likely your most valuable asset.

Have Furnace Inspected - An HVAC contractor can check to ensure your furnace is working safely. The filter should be inspected monthly and replaced when it becomes dirty. Pleated filters are recommended.

Insulate Pipes - For exposed pipes or ones in an unheated area, water inside can freeze and cause them to burst. Buy pipe insulation at the hardware store, cut to fit, wrap it around and secure with duct tape.

Have Fireplace Cleaned - Soot in a wood-burning fireplace can ignite. An annual inspection and cleaning by a certified chimney sweep is recommended. If you rarely use your fireplace or have a gas fireplace, an inspection every three years will suffice.

Keep Locks from Freezing - Powdered graphite lubricant can be sprayed into your door locks to prevent them from freezing. Buy spray at the hardware store. Do this once every season.

Seal Drafts - Using a lit candle go along baseboards and windowsills. If it flickers you have a draft. On baseboards, seal the gaps with caulking. For windows and doors, weather stripping can be used.

Clear Gutters - Gutters become clogged with leaves and debris that can easily freeze, damaging your roof. With gloves and a tall ladder you can complete the job in a couple of hours.

Drain Sprinklers - An irrigation contractor can drain water in your sprinkler system and blow out remaining water with compressed air. This prevents the pipes from expanding and cracking.

Remove Overgrown Branches - Branches growing over power lines, house, garage or driveway could break off in a storm, resulting in major damage.

Add Mulch - A blanket of hardwood mulch added to flowerbeds will help regulate soil temperature. This acts as a form of insulation, protecting the roots so your plants will survive extreme temperatures.

Trim Perennials - Cut plants back to three inches above ground. This will save your perennials from insects that could gather there and harm your home when they resurface in spring.

Julie Waidelich is a local real estate broker and owner of Nest Properties Austin.



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(Continued from Page 4)

your screen interaction each day. Additionally, the app sums it all up neatly in an overall “addiction score” so that you can keep track of your improvement.

2. The RescueTime App

According to RescueTime’s website, this app has a variety of features that can help you track and manage your social media habits. A blocking aspect denies access to any website you select and an overall productivity score lets you know if your newfound time management skills are paying off.

The lite version of this handy tool is completely free and allows you to track the time you spend on the worldwide web. However, RescueTime’s blocking feature only comes in its premium version which can be purchased for \$9 per month. This app is available for computers and mobile devices

3. The Moment App

To conclude this list of helpful tools, the Moment app includes many of the same features previously mentioned in descriptions for other apps. However, Moment does have a sub-entity labeled Moment Family, which enables you to control the browsing and usage habits of your entire family depending on what in-app purchases you decide to make. Its description notes this app is great

for accountability purposes, as family members can track other’s goals and usage amounts.

Currently, Moment and Moment Family are only available for iPhones. However, you can sign-up to receive notifications when it is available for Androids as well.

In many ways, technology has made our lives much easier, but it is important to recognize the possible dangers of spending too much time glued to a screen. Hopefully, these three tools will help you increase your productivity and will free up time for you to do things you truly enjoy!



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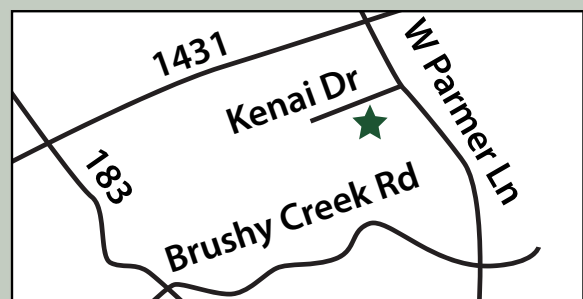


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5 Ways to Honor Your Local Veterans on Veterans Day

While most of us are quick to post on social media, fly an American flag, or offer a quick handshake to a local servicemember on Veterans Day, many are unsure how to show our full appreciation for their service and sacrifice.

Below are five ways to truly honor veterans this Veterans Day:

1. Volunteer Your Time

There are hundreds of volunteer organizations that work both directly and indirectly with veterans. Turn your appreciation into action by offering your time and energy to any one of these noble causes. Contact your local VFW or American Legion to see what upcoming events may be in need of volunteers. Offer assistance to a local elderly or disabled vet, or volunteer a few hours to a local veteran-owned business. Whatever your skill, put it to use in your community by helping out the veterans closest to you. Visit texvet.com/volunteer to search for opportunities available in your area.

2. Donate Your Dollars

If you're short on time, making a monetary donation is another great way to show support. There are many organizations that offer various forms of aid and assistance to our country's servicemen and women. For instance, Homes for Our Troops builds specially-equipped homes for injured servicemembers. Navy-Marine Corps Relief Society offers financial assistance and scholarships. The Gary Sinise Foundation creates and supports unique programs specifically for veterans. There are countless organizations dedicated to improving the lives of American veterans, and they can only continue to do so with the financial support of grateful citizens like you.

3. Take Time to Listen

Taking time to have a real conversation with your neighbor seems to be a lost art in today's virtual world! Veterans have a wealth of knowledge and interesting stories to share for those willing to listen. Of course, not every veteran will be willing to share the details of his or her time in the service, but many enjoy reminiscing and

sharing their unique perspective. Rather than simply thanking them for serving their country, take a moment to open up a meaningful dialogue about their military service and how it has shaped their views on life and liberty.

4. Stay Informed

How much do you really know about how our country's military works? What is the status of current legislation regarding today's active-duty troops and veterans? Which political leaders have a military background? Many people have little more than basic knowledge of America's armed forces. One of the best ways to show your appreciation is to take the time to understand exactly what role the military plays in today's world. Arm yourself with knowledge by reading (and verifying) information about the military's mission and its history, and always exercise your rights by voting for people and policies that support veterans.

5. Pay it Forward

The service of veterans is the cornerstone on which American freedom stands. It is important to appreciate both the rights and responsibilities of being an American and to work together to ensure that veterans' sacrifices are not in vain. Honor a veteran this Veterans Day by being a good citizen, a good neighbor, and a good friend. Even the smallest good deed can go a long way towards making America a better place for everyone.



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Gardening Tips and To-Do Lists for November

by Marie Iannotti



November gardening chores really highlight the differences in regional gardens. For many, there is no November garden to speak of. Others can't wait for the cool days and slower pace of fall vegetable gardening. But even if your garden is already covered in snow, there are still garden tasks calling: last minute bulbs to plant, leaves that should not go to waste, roses that need some TLC and, unfortunately, insect pests are much harder than their tiny size would suggest. You will still want to be on the alert for signs of trouble, inside and out.

On a more positive side, winter is a great time to evaluate your garden layout. You can clearly see the architecture or bones of your garden. If the view of your garden is less than inspiring or non-existent in winter, You should make some notes to add more definition in terms of things like structures, evergreens, or other architectural elements.

Take a look at what you could be doing in your November garden and try to schedule a little time outdoors before the holidays claim you.

General November Garden Care

- Rake leaves and make leaf mold or compost.
- Clean, sharpen, and oil garden tools.
- Finish winterizing your water garden.
- Start forcing bulbs like paperwhites, hyacinth, and amaryllis for the holidays.
- Add organic matter to beds.
- Cover compost so that rain doesn't flood and leach the nutrients.
- Keep weeding. It's easier to see the weeds once the garden plants die back. Now is a great time to get rid of some perennial weeds that stay green all year.
- Keep watering, until the ground freezes. Pay particular attention to anything you planted late in the season.

Caring for Indoor Plants in Winter

- Check that indoor plants are receiving enough water, humidity and air circulation.
- Keep an eye out for pests like spider mites and scale, and take care of them before they become a problem.
- Although many indoor plants go dormant in winter, watch for signs that they are not getting enough light (yellowing leaves, straggly stems...) and move your plants to a brighter spot, if necessary.



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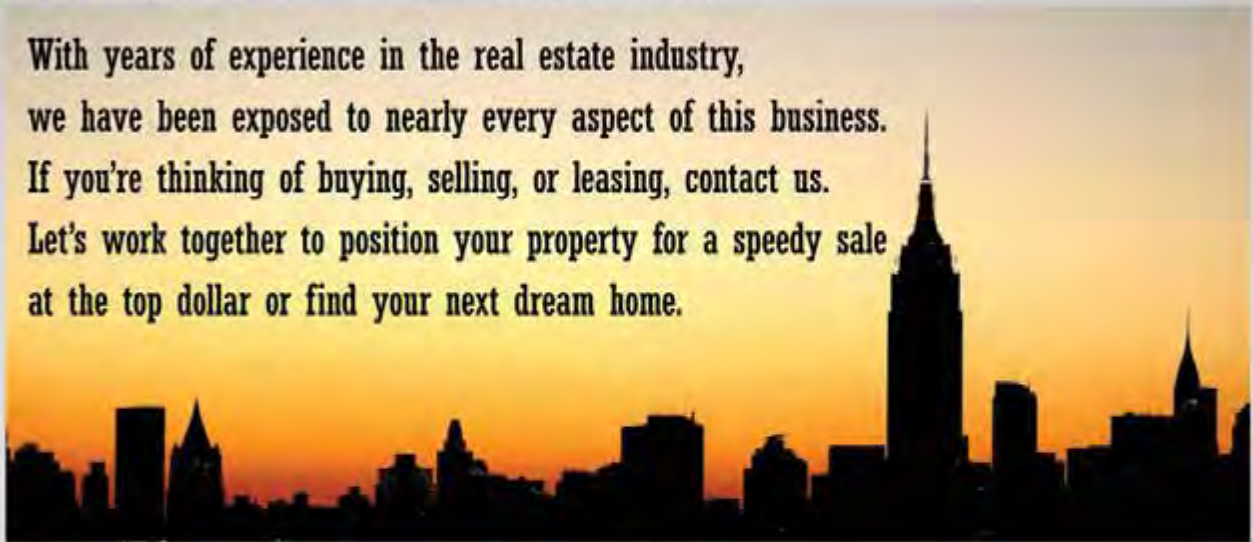
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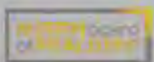


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