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Open Book with Jenna Bush HagerPage 2 Keep up with the latest daily buzz with the Daily BuzzFeed newsletter! For some people, there is no greater pleasure than sitting in a comfortable chair, cracking the rigid spine of a new book, and diving headlong into a different world. Books open infinite possibilities and pleasure, but unfortunately, reading is a pastime in which fewer people engage. If you're like a large percentage of Americans, you haven't got a book at all this year, and it's even more like that if you did, you didn't finish it. The results of the survey published by the Associated Press and Ipsos show that one in four Americans do not read books at all, and half of Americans read less than four each year. Sign up for a Chase Freedom Unlimited® or Chase Freedom Flex™ credit card to get: 5% money back on grocery store purchases on up to \$12k spent in the first year, in addition to cash back rates for typical categories. (If you sign up by January 13, 2021) \$200 signup bonus (after spending \$500 in the first 3 months) 0% APR intro for 15 months. Although the decrease in time spent reading is sad, what is sadder is our declining ability to read. According to the Oxford Journals, the average reading ability of Americans hovers around eighth- or ninth grade levels, and the Onu Chronicle reports that up to 25 million citizens cannot read or write at all. The United States ranks 21st in the world for literacy. Number one in national literacy? Cuba. What is even scarier is that, according to a report published by Renaissance Learning, the average reading capacity of our high school graduates is at the fifth grade level. The benefits of reading In today's hectic world, picking up a book might seem like it's not worth the time. However, reading offers countless benefits: 1. Reading uses your average American brain spend five and a half hours every day watching TV. While television can be fun, it does little for your brain or for your body. In fact, you burn more calories reading a book than watching TV. Reading is an active mental process: you think more, use your imagination and increase your knowledge. 2. Reading expands your worldview I didn't actually go through a dusty village in Mali. I was not born into the life of an Indian in the Plains in 1800. And, I've never trudged along the rainy, dark streets of Paris with a hungry belly and nothing in my pocket except a notebook and a blunt pencil to write my next story. However, I have experienced all these things through the magic and mystery of books. Books allow you to experience other people, places and cultures you may not be exposed in ordinary life. This helps you develop compassion for suffering, empathy for those who are different than you, and an open mind. 3. Books Build Focus When you read a magazine, jump from images to captions to story, page after page. When you read a website, you are constantly distracted by ads and moving links that urge you to next site or story. While any reading is beneficial, the books help you develop the ability to focus and focus because there is no distraction - there is just the story. In addition, reading helps improve memory. 4. Reading makes you interesting the brightest in the world, the most creative minds have written millions of books, sharing their wisdom, all of them are just waiting for you to pick up and discover. The more you read, the more you need to talk to colleagues, friends, meetings, spouse or partner and strangers. Reading gives you a rich repository of knowledge, ideas and experiences that you can then share with others. 5. Reading helps you find out I learned to start a book reading business. I learned about yoga, Buddhism, American history, mythology, and many other fascinating topics through reading. Reading is a very cheap way to learn new skills and concepts. Instead of participating in a class and paying overrated tuition, or instead of wanting you to build a blog or program software, learn yourself through books. Reading empowers you to take responsibility for your education, no matter how young or old you are. Reading more Sitting down to read doesn't mean you have to carve an hour or more of your day. There are several ways in which you can sneak more reading into your life: 1. Cancel cable TV I canceled cable TV years ago, and I must say that I haven't lost it a bit. Watching less TV is a very easy way to open time to read more. I often use the evening to read, and it's my favorite part of the day. If I still have cable, otherwise I could be flipping through channel after channel, looking for something to watch. 2. Invest in a tablet device According to a Pew Research study, and published in NBC News, 30% of survey respondents who own a tablet or an electronic reader say they spend more time reading than they used to. They also read several books: The average tablet owner reads 24 books a year, compared to other readers, who read an average of 15 books a year. I have an Amazon Kindle, and I love it. One of the biggest benefits to owning a Kindle is that Amazon has thousands of books, a vast majority of them classic, available for free download. This is a very easy and cheap way to get fast and portable access to the best books in the world. Another benefit of e-readers is that they are small. You can take your entire library with you on a plane, train or purse. You can read during the morning commute, while you are queuing at the grocery store, or waiting to pick up the kids from school. E-readers make it easier to fill small pockets of time with instead of aimlessly staring into space or checking Twitter on your smartphone. 3. Choose Books or Genres that interest you Do you know how many times I took War and Peace and tried to read it? At least a dozen. It's one of those books I feel I should read, but I've never been able to get into the story, no matter how hard I've tried. Tried. You're not ready for a book, or a book isn't ready for you. Maybe you're not old enough, or you're not at the right time in your life. You might not be destined to intersect paths at all - and that's good. So don't make yourself read a book you're not interested in just because you feel you should read it. Start with books that interest you - you'll get more pleasure and value from the experience. If you feel like a chore, then you're not doing yourself any favors. 4. Set a time If you have a very busy schedule, you'll probably need to set aside time to read. And that means putting it in your schedule, or choosing a specific time of day. Even if it's only 10 or 15 minutes, it will still be a good way to develop the habit, helps you relax, and allow you to momentarily forget about the stress of everyday life in a healthy way. Try to read on your lunch break or wake up earlier than everyone else and read while you have a cup of coffee in the morning. You could also try reducing Internet time in the evening - there are some amazing reading available online, but the web can also be really distracting. Reading children after dinner or before bed will help them develop the love of reading, and allow you to read more as well. 5. Reading with others reading with your children is a wonderful way to teach them the love of reading. But reading with others, would be with friends or as part of a book club, can also be a reward and motivating way to read more. There are even online book clubs you can join. These clubs expose you to books you may not have heard of, and also give you the opportunity to discuss what you have read and learned with others. These discussions and opinions can also give you a better understanding of their books and characters. Final Word Reading should be a joy, not an obligation. Books are full of magic and mystery, and if you're not used to reading regularly it might be hard to touch in that at first. Keep going, though. Pick up a book and find time to read during the day. If it's not a good book or if it doesn't bring you pleasure, then stop reading it! You certainly don't have to finish every card you start. What other strategies do you use to add more reading time to your day? Screenshot: FlipboardTech 911Tech 911Do you have a technical question that keeps you awake at night? We'd love to answer that! Email david.murphy@lifehacker.com with Tech 911 in the subject line. I check out a lot of apps from Lifehacker, and I recently wrote quite large roundups of must-haves for Android and iOS. However, there is a lot out there, and that can make it difficult to find the best app for whatever it is you try to do. For Tech week 911 column, we're answering an app-themed question from John's Lifehacker reader: I've been a long-time user of Google News because I like to be able to drag through every post and stop the ones that interest me. However, since this update ui that did white, I noticed that the synchronization stopped properly in the background. As I literally have to keep the app in the foreground as it downloads or will not download all the posts properly. If I read Lifehacker on Google News while online, now seems to load unnecessary menus (or something) that makes my phone lag. Do you have an alternative to suggest? Hmm. I don't really use many news aggregator apps-well, none- but I just spent some time with Google News, and I didn't find it very horrible at all. However, if you have a problem with it, that's enough for me. You didn't mention which smartphone platform you're on, but if you're using iOS, you can always switch to Apple's default news app and see you like it. If you're on Android, you're probably stuck with Google News (or a third-party lamer news app) that was preinstalled on your device. As for the alternatives, I have three main suggestions, and I invite Lifehacker readers to chim below with some of theirs. Try installing Pocket, which will allow you to save items from any mobile browser you use. This way, you can browse Lifehacker (or anything else) in your browser and save articles to see later in an interface that's probably easier for your eyes than Google News. This is not a news aggregator app, more a clip it to read it later app, but it might help you. When it comes to reading a latest services that allow you to save articles today to read when you have... Read moreIf you want an app that drops a bunch of potential items in front and center, you can always try Flipboard. You'll get a lot of tiles to look at for the websites or categories you're interested in, offering the latest (or recommended) stories you might want to read. Flipboard has a little more pizzazz graphic than Google News, and allows you to clean

your own magazine of content if you want to share your favorite articles with others or read them later at your convenience. You can also try feedly - similar concept to Flipboard. minus tiles and graphics. A number of Lifehacker editors believe it is a great content-casking app because it gives you both recommendations and allows you to customize your newsfeed as you see fit. We know we shouldn't let email run our lives, but we do it anyway. We use email as a to-do Read any other great news candra apps you particularly like, Lifehacker readers? Let our letter-writer know in the comments, and I'll pass along the best suggestions! Do you have a technical question that keeps you up at night? Tired of troubleshooting Windows or your Mac? Look for tips about apps, browser extensions, or utilities that can you use it to accomplish a specific task? Let us know! Tell us in the comments below or email david.murphy@lifehacker.com. david.murphy@lifehacker.com. david.murphy@lifehacker.com.

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