

Miss Katie's Kids Korner

The Zen of Loll

by Katie Taylor

Summertime and the living is easy. For whom? If you're like most families, summertime is just more driving around with the windows open.

And it's so much shorter!

When I was growing up, the school term was based on the harvest. The fact that nobody I knew worked on a farm didn't matter; Memorial Day marked the beginning of summer and school didn't start again until two weeks after Labor Day! Things are different now. Memorial Day has become another three-day weekend and, if you don't start thinking about back to school by the second week of August, Staples is likely to be out of gel pens. In short, we have about six weeks to cram an entire summer's worth of "living easy."

With the exception of one or two weeks of summer vacation, most of us will be working this summer. And, if you are like many of the area residents, your business depends on the additional income brought in by summer tourists. Some of you might even have a seasonal business. There isn't a lot of kayaking in January, so if you run a boating business, your summer hours are longer than during the school year. Yet, even though you are working, it's summer, and you're going to HAVE FUN!

You're also going to get some of those items crossed off your "To Do" list, which may include some or all of the following: Clean out the garage, paint the house, learn to speak French, redo the kitchen and/or bathroom (always a favorite as you can put everything in a cooler, barbecue and dine al fresco), organize 12 years of collected paperwork (teacher's special), plant a garden, go camping, visit family, go to high school reunions. It may seem like a lot, but hey, no problem; it's summer... there's PLENTY of time to do all this and MORE!

No, there isn't. There are a mere SIX weeks, and if you fill them with too many activities, you'll lose out on the most precious thing about summer: the time to loll. "Loll" is a summer word, preferable to "hanging out" or "relaxing" or the new-agey "breathe," because it brings to mind moving slowly and in no particular hurry or direction. To achieve the Zen of Loll, you need to be realistic about how much you can or really want to do in the hot summer months. Here are a couple of suggestions.

In order to have time to loll, you need to have a plan so that you don't

get all stressed out because your To Do list isn't half done. Limit your children's activities to one a day. For older children an all day camp for a couple of weeks is a good idea. It's enough structure to keep them out of trouble and gives them something to do for the better part of the summer. For the younger ones, find an activity that meets in the mornings. That's when they're at their best, and it's too hot to do much in the afternoon, except maybe sit by the pool and take a siesta.

Most children don't like to stop playing in the middle of the day to take a nap – especially in the summer – but by calling it a siesta you might get a better response. Tell them that in Latin countries everyone, even grownups, takes a siesta in the afternoon. Older children could benefit by the siesta by tackling their summer reading requirements during that time. And it's a great idea for you, too. No running around allowed. Siesta is prime lolling time.

With the price of gas rising on a daily basis, many of us will be sticking close to home this summer. This is not a carte blanche to tackle everything on the To Do list. Pick one or two things and set aside time every day to complete them. If it's a BIG project, like putting up a deck, be sure you budget enough time (your week off) to have it completed by the time your relatives from Arizona arrive.

When you do have visitors, keep reminding yourself that being a gracious host family does not mean turning your home into a B & B... unless you love being a short order cook and room attendant. This is your summer, too. Incorporate your guests (and their children) into the daily routine of the household. Take them to the farmer's market; they'll think it's quaint and you'll have someone to help you schlep groceries and clean vegetables. Having guests help with activities like stripping the beds or throwing a load of wet towels into the washing machine will free up valuable lolling time. This goes for your own family as well. Children still need to pick up their toys, toss dirty laundry into the hamper, and put cereal bowls into the dishwasher.

If you start your summer with a loose plan, with lots of lolling time, six weeks may be enough to energize you for the next school year. And you might even have a little *fun* in the process. 🌟

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