

# Lesson 5 – Hobbies

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Welcome to Lesson 5 of the Everyday English Speaking Course! Today we're going to talk about hobbies – the word "hobby" refers to an activity or interest that you do for pleasure or relaxation.

## Conversation #1 – Talking about Hobbies

*Ron and Eileen are getting to know each other on a first date. Listen to each of them ask and answer questions about their hobbies.*

**Ron:** So what do you like to do in your free time? Do you have any hobbies?

**Eileen:** I'm really into rock climbing – I go up to the mountains every chance I can get.

**Ron:** Rock climbing?! Wow – how long have you been doing that?

**Eileen:** About 5 years. My college roommate introduced me to it. Unfortunately I've been super busy these days and I haven't been able to do much climbing, so I go jogging to stay in shape. How about you – do you play any sports?



**Ron:** No, I'm not very athletic. I work out at the gym... once in a while! I spend a lot of time reading, and I'm interested in photography – but actually, my newest passion is gardening.

**Eileen:** Really? How'd you get into gardening?

**Ron:** I read an article that piqued my interest, about how home-grown vegetables are much healthier than what you buy in the supermarket – so I decided to give it a try.

**Eileen:** No kidding. Well, I don't have a garden, but I have been getting into cooking and baking lately – I'm not very good at it, but it is fun to experiment!

## Conversation Vocabulary & Phrases

Ron starts by asking Eileen about her hobbies. Here are a few different ways to ask this question:

- "What are your hobbies?" / "Do you have any hobbies?"
- "What do you do in your spare/free time?"
- "What do you like to do for fun?"

- **“What do you like to do outside of work/school?”**

To answer the question, you can say:

- **“I like... [reading / to read / literature]”**
- **“I love... [painting / to paint / art]”**
- **“I enjoy... [surfing]”**
- **“I’m really into... [photography/chess/gardening]”**
- **“I’m interested in... [astronomy/cooking/computers]”**  
*Be careful not to say “I’m interesting in...” – it’s a very common error!*
- **“I spend a lot of time... [fishing]”**
- **“My newest passion is... [blogging/woodworking/bird watching]”**

After “like” and “love,” you can use the “to” form or the “ing” form of the verb (or a noun) – but after “enjoy” and in the other phrases, you can only use a noun or a verb in the –ing form.

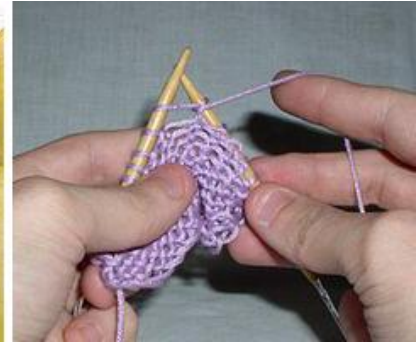
For a hobby that you’ve started recently, you can say:

- **I’ve been getting into [cooking and baking] lately.**
- **I’ve taken up [sailing].**

There are hundreds and hundreds of hobbies, and you can read an extensive list here:  
[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List\\_of\\_hobbies](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_hobbies) - but these are a few of the most common:

### **Indoor hobbies:**

- **blogging / writing**
- **baking / cooking**  
*baking is making bread, cake, muffins, cupcakes, cookies, etc.*  
*cooking involves all other types of food*
- **collecting cards, coins, art, antiques, stamps, rocks, vintage books/cars/clothing**  
*“vintage” items are those of an old/classic style*
- **sewing / crocheting / knitting**



- **drawing / painting / photography / scrapbooking**

*"scrapbooking" means arranging photos in a book in an artistic way, with decorations*



- **tinkering with electronics/computers, playing video games**
- **woodworking**  
*making things with wood*

### Outdoor and athletic hobbies:

- **bird watching**
- **camping / hiking**



- **gardening / fishing / hunting**



- **jogging**
- **rock climbing**
- **sailing / surfing / water sports**
- **skateboarding**

Here are some ways to talk specifically about sports and music:

- **"Do you play any sports?"**
  - "Yes, I play \_\_\_\_\_."
  - "I do yoga / martial arts / pilates."
  - "No, I prefer working out at the gym."
  - "No, I'm not very athletic."
  - "No, but I love to watch! I'm a big fan of... [sport / team]."
- **"Do you play a musical instrument?"**
  - "Yes, I play \_\_\_\_\_."
  - "I've played the piano for several years."
  - "I'm taking \_\_\_\_\_ lessons."
  - "I'm in a band."
  - "I sing in a choir."

In the dialogue, there are two "follow-up" questions that you can use to ask for more information, after the other person tells you their hobbies:

- **"How'd you get into that?"** (= *how did you become interested in it?*)
  - "I read an article / saw a TV show that piqued my interest."  
*"piqued my interest" = made me interested in learning more*
  - "I took a class."
  - "I just thought it'd be interesting to try it out."
  - "My friend introduced me to it (and I've been doing it ever since)."
- **"How long have you been doing that?"**
  - "I just started."
  - "For a few years." (for + time period)



- "Since I was a kid." (since + point in the past)
- "Ever since I was in college."

## Conversation #2 - Benefits of Hobbies

*Erica's wondering which new hobby to take up. Listen to her conversation with Natalie.*

**Erica:** Ever since I quit my job, I've had a lot of time on my hands. I really need to find a new hobby.

**Natalie:** Well, what's something you've always wanted to try?

**Erica:** I'd love to learn how to dance... but I think I'm too shy!

**Natalie:** Oh, don't let that stop you! If I had more free time, I'd definitely take dance classes.

**Erica:** So what do you like to do for fun?

**Natalie:** I've gotten into yoga; it's a great way to relieve stress – and a fantastic workout. And I've always enjoyed writing, so I'm going to start a blog.

**Erica:** Oh, good for you! You know, I had a ton of hobbies when I was a kid... I used to collect coins, skateboard, play chess... but none of them really interest me anymore.

**Natalie:** Hey – why don't you take up a craft like pottery, knitting, or jewelry-making? It'd be fun – and you could even sell your creations to make a little money.

**Erica:** That's actually not a bad idea. I've always wanted to explore my artistic side.



## Conversation Vocabulary & Phrases

Erica starts out by saying she has “a lot of time on her hands” – that means she has a lot of free time with nothing to do. Here are a few more phrases for talking about present, past, and potential future hobbies:

- **"I have a lot of time on my hands. I need to find a hobby."**
- **"I have a ton of different hobbies."**  
*"a ton of" = a very large number of*
- **"If I had more free time, I'd \_\_\_\_."**  
*use this phrase for an imaginary situation – IF I had more free time, I WOULD...*

- **"I'd like to try \_\_\_\_."**  
*use this phrase to talk about something you are interested in doing, but you haven't started yet*
- **"I used to \_\_\_\_\_, but not anymore."**  
*use this phrase to talk about something you did frequently in the past, but you don't do it now*

A couple of different benefits are also mentioned in the dialogue. Here are some different answers to the question of why you enjoy your hobby:

- **"...because it's a great workout."**  
*= it's good exercise*
- **"...because it's a great way to relieve stress."**
- **"...because it helps me clear my mind."**  
*= it helps you forget your worries and concerns*
- **"...because it helps me relax."**
- **"...because I find it fascinating."**
- **"...because it's fun/interesting/exciting/(other adjectives)."**
- **"...because I can earn a little extra money on the side."**

Today's speaking exercise is to tell me about your hobbies – talk about some hobbies you had in the past, some hobbies you have currently, and one hobby you'd like to try. [Click here](#) to record your message, and I'll send you some tips on your speaking.

#### Image sources:

- Crochet: [Prattflora](#) / Knitting: [Blahedo](#) / Sewing: [Ji-Elle](#)
- Scrapbooking: [Михеева Анна](#) / Drawing: [FML](#) / Painting: [Twice25](#)
- Photography: [Nicolás García](#) / Camping: [ForestWander](#) / Hiking: [Michael Fiegle](#)
- Climbing: [gego2605](#) / Pottery: [Randyoo](#) / Gardening: [ISA Red de Energía del Perú](#)