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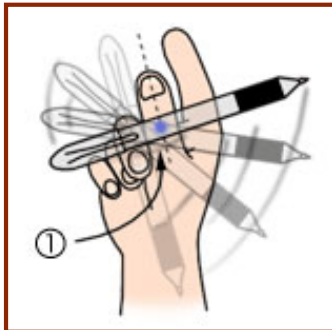
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Playtime! The Best Desk Distractions

by Michael C. Sherrin
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You should want to sit at your desk. With more people working from home, whether after hours or telecommuting, desks need to be more inviting. When your boss isn't looking, you can mix business with pleasure. Taking breaks is healthy and helps productivity, but we need some real incentive. Playing games or playing with toys, here are some ideas to make your desk a more rewarding place.

ACTION FIGURES

No longer solely for your ten-year-old nephew, action figures appeal to a larger demographic. Based on everything from comic book characters to television shows to historical figures, action figures are the perfect thing to fiddle with while that presentation downloads. Extensive collections based on the Simpsons, Family Guy and Buffy the Vampire Slayer make for excellent entertainment and unique conversation starters. Many figures are now made "super-poseable" meaning you can put them in all sorts of inappropriate positions giving a mature edge to your inner child.

VIDEO GAMES

From Pong to Yahoo! Games, there's less and less reason to work on your computer. Puzzle or simulation games offer quick and stimulating satisfaction. A quick search of the internet reveals thousands of variations of Asteroids, Space Invaders and Pong, giving you a valuable 15 minutes of mindless excitement. You can find dozens of free games online at Yahoo.com or download some from Download.com and GameHippo.com .

SNACK DRAWER

The details of a snack drawer are a very personal choice, but vital for any desk, at home or work. Keeping a healthy stash of unhealthy junk food allows your mind to work while your body feels satisfied (naughty magazines are a full fledged distraction but fulfill similar needs). It's best to prepare for various potential cravings: chocolate, fruity, salty, minty, chewy, etc. Individually wrapped candies are of course best, but also consider boxes of cereal for light, healthy snacks.

PEN SPINNING

An amazing distraction for almost any circumstance, pen spinning not only entertains but impresses. Pen spinning is literally spinning a pen around your fingers. There are different tricks: spinning it around your thumb, ring finger, spinning the pen backward and more. It's surprising how something seemingly mundane can dazzle for so long. Pen spinning takes time to learn, but the people you'll impress will be worth the effort. Check out Pentrix.com for excellent guides on pen spinning tricks, complete with videos.

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