

Making the Most of Downtime

Today's economy has left long haul drivers with more downtime between loads than ever before. In the past, drivers could expect to wait just a few hours between dropping off one load and picking up another. Now, drivers can wait a few days.

The most important thing you can do is to keep dispatchers/supervisors informed of abnormal layovers/downtime. While they may not be able to immediately remedy the situation, a compilation of regular occurrences will greatly assist them in their efforts to reduce downtime. In addition, naming specific incidents, along with details, will assist greatly. So take notes!

Meanwhile, if you have a significant amount of downtime ahead of you, after doing the bare necessities like eating and sleeping, what else can a driver do to keep busy?

There are the more typical ways to pass the time such as:

- Reading books/magazines/newspapers
- Writing (i.e. journal, blogs)
- Surfing the internet
- Exercising
- Watching TV/movies
- Puzzles (crosswords, Sudoku)

Some drivers have chosen to hone their musical skills by learning how to play guitar or studying opera. For the more adventurous, activities like skydiving have become popular. Others have taken up photography, painting or sightseeing.

Recently, new and somewhat "controversial" hobbies have emerged among drivers. It has become more commonplace for drivers to engage in hobbies such as quilting, sewing and knitting, which can easily take up large chunks of time due to the focus required.

When looking into a new hobby or activity, consider the following:

- Portability
- Cost – materials, fees
- Amount of time needed to complete
- Availability to resources/materials/equipment
- Goals/rewards
- Personal enrichment