

Living 50 Plus

Budget to Stay Busy, Not Bored This Winter

This winter is not going to be a repeat of last year, at least not at my house. COVID will no doubt keep raging around the world, limiting our options for activities, canceling plans that were made with fingers crossed. But here at home I'm going to be busy, not bored.

I've decided to spend a little mental health money that in a normal world I would have used for meals out, a few new outfits and maybe a couple of week-

ends away at a very nice hotel in the next state. To make up for the disappointments, I've renewed my Amazon Prime, not only for the free shipping but for the movies and videos I can watch for free. There are hundreds of documentaries, including ones on travel, giving me great views of places I can't currently go. There are thousands of movies and television series I can watch with my Roku device. And then there are the books, sent in-

stantly to my Kindle, with font sizes I can change in a moment.

If I'm in the mood for British television and movies, Adobe.tv has a big selection (even Australian!), only costing a few dollars per month. BritBox is nearly as good as Adobe, at almost the same price.

I'm looking at an inexpensive exercise bike, possibly a recumbent one. These allow all the movements of riding a bicycle, but there is a seat back to lean against

and two handles to hold. (If there is no space for a bike, there are pedal machines that can be used while seated in a chair.)

And then there are the arts and crafts to fill the long days. I searched online for crafts for adults and found thousands of kits, including several types I'd never tried before. Some of them, if they turn out well, might end up being holiday gifts I won't have to shop for!

Holiday Gift Shortages

If you will have holiday shopping to do this year, you need to get started on it now. Manufacturers and store owners are saying there will be shortages. There are labor problems, problems with container ships that can't be offloaded in ports, trucks that can't deliver the goods, material supply-chain problems ... you get the picture.

Here are two suggestions to keep gift-buying simpler this year: toys and books.

TOYS -- If you have small

children to buy for, shop now. Manufacturers of many of the most popular toys are saying that they've seen shortages of required materials on a global scale. Try local toy stores for items they have in stock now.

BOOKS -- Call your library and ask for age-appropriate suggestions for young children. Then, list in hand, call your local bookstore. Ask if they have in stock what you need. If you can actually go to the store and pick up the books

curbside, you're ahead of the game. Otherwise try ordering online, but look for things already in stock.

Check the delivery dates of the various Kindle colors. Some are available immediately; others aren't.

When it comes to online shopping, experts advise ordering items that are as close to home as possible, not across oceans. Beware of local shipping delays as well. Gone are the days of always receiving boxes in just a few days. If you order something online, track it, and follow up with a phone call if necessary.

For teens and adults, consider buying them a Kindle, an e-book reader available on Amazon. (I've had three different versions of Kindle since 2016 and truly appreciate the way I can order a book and have it appear on my e-reader within minutes.) A new Kindle, a \$15 case and a \$50 gift certificate for e-books would be welcome gifts for readers.

Do We Really Need a Booster Shot?

Depending on when we went for the COVID vaccine, we could be eligible for the booster now ... or not. Elderly seniors, as well as those in nursing homes and the immunocompromised, were first in line early in the year. The rest of us straggled in over the next several months. At this

point, it's unknown whether there should be a six- or eight-month wait before the booster.

The Pfizer booster (called Comirnaty) is now available to those 65 and older and some others depending on risk and medical conditions. At this writing, Moderna is asking for authorization, and there is no booster yet for the J&J vaccine.

Do we actually need a booster? We're all wondering (my pharmacist says half of their calls are about boosters), and the answers are a mixed bag.

A pulmonary physician at a major university hospital said if we're under 65 and relatively healthy, no, we don't need one.

The U.S. Department of Health & Human Services says that the vaccines we already received will start to wear off, so yes, we should get the booster, starting with seniors and nursing-home residents.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention is

calling for booster shots only for the immunocompromised, but not others.

The World Health Organization is calling for a moratorium on shots until poor countries get theirs.

While we wait for real answers, keep your vaccine record card where you can find it. You'll need it, should you decide to get a booster.

What am I going to do? I'm going to stall. I'm going to wait to see how the booster plays out. With the highly contagious Delta variant being such a menace right now, I'd like to see if perhaps that's going to be added to the booster vaccine.



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