

[JOB SEEKER, LAYOFFS](#)

YOUNG, MALE AND UNEMPLOYED? AVOID VIDEO GAMES TO GET OUT OF YOUR PARENTS' BASEMENT



Plenty of studies confirm what you already know: involuntary unemployment is terribly difficult. Beyond having to [skimp on luxuries](https://safetynet.com/blog/9-ways-make-ends-meet-youre-jobs/), [revise your budget](https://safetynet.com/blog/use-budgeting-template/), [update your resume](https://safetynet.com/blog/resume-trends-modern-job-market/), and [polish your job interview skills](https://safetynet.com/blog/how-to-nail-that-job-interview/), finding yourself out of a job is likely to [negatively impact your health](https://safetynet.com/blog/the-impact-of-layoffs-on-health/).

Still, there is at least one thing you can do that is guaranteed to keep you out of a trap in which an increasing number of job searchers have found themselves: Stay away from video games.

Really.

Last year, [researchers at the University of Chicago and Princeton University reported](http://fortune.com/2017/07/16/video-games-users-men/) that 67% of nonworking young men now live with a parent or close relative—up from 46% in 2000. When reporting the amount of time they spent on computers each day, participants revealed they spent 60% of those hours gaming.

The real kicker? When asked how they felt about their circumstances, many reported an *increase* happiness overall—despite being out of a job, single, and living with their parents.

Why, you may ask? For one, [video games are inexpensive, entertaining, and provide the rewards of mastering new skills](https://www.menshealth.com/techlust/video-games-better-life/). In the face of difficult financial circumstances, why wouldn't gaming become an increasingly [compelling escape for the growing number of unemployed men](https://www.1843magazine.com/features/escape-to-another-world/)?

If you want to dodge this predicament (and, with it, your parents' basement), you don't have to swear off screen time for good. But you will need to find a more productive means of digital escape while also building your confidence.



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Branch out

Switch out half of the hours you spend with your gaming community and join a free online forum related to your career circumstances. [Reddit](https://www.reddit.com/) [https://www.reddit.com/], for example, offers pretty much any online community you can think of, many with supportive, friendly, and funny participants. Browse forums like [GetMotivated](https://www.reddit.com/r/GetMotivated/) [https://www.reddit.com/r/GetMotivated/], [JobSearchHacks](https://www.reddit.com/r/JobSearchHacks/) [https://www.reddit.com/r/JobSearchHacks/], [Jobs](https://www.reddit.com/r/jobs/) [https://www.reddit.com/r/jobs/], and [regional job subreddits](https://www.reddit.com/r/forhire/wiki/loca) [https://www.reddit.com/r/forhire/wiki/loca]. Search for a subreddit related to your dream career ([DigitalNomad](https://www.reddit.com/r/digitalnomad/) [https://www.reddit.com/r/digitalnomad/], for example, or just [DreamCareerHelp](https://www.reddit.com/r/DreamCareerHelp/) [https://www.reddit.com/r/DreamCareerHelp/]) and figure out how to make it a reality.

Build your brand

Spend time online building a personal website and/or writing a blog that showcases your work experience and other skills and interests. [This article suggests inexpensive ways to](https://safetynet.com/blog/networking-after-layoff-between-jobs/) [https://safetynet.com/blog/networking-after-layoff-between-jobs/], polish your digital skills while highlighting your creativity and communications chops.

Master a new skill

These days, online learning is an affordable and legitimate means of gaining new job skills. [This article by "the balance"](https://www.thebalance.com/websites-learn-new-skills-1200627) [https://www.thebalance.com/websites-learn-new-skills-1200627] lists more than 25 sites where you can explore everything from design software to mechanics to starting your own business. Gain that same sense of mastery that video games gave you while [acquiring lucrative skills](https://www.onlinecourseport.com/30-most-lucrative-skills-you-can-learn-online/) [https://www.onlinecourseport.com/30-most-lucrative-skills-you-can-learn-online/], like, say, HTML coding or video production. Then get on a related subreddit and share your accomplishments with folks who care.

Make yourself more interesting

Your online activities don't all have to be about job preparation. There is plenty to zone out with that doesn't involve trending memes and cat pics (still, who doesn't love a [good cat pic](https://www.buzzfeed.com/expresident/best-cat-pictures?utm_term=.mrd7ODnEV#qqD7Xoa6Y) [https://www.buzzfeed.com/expresident/best-cat-pictures?utm_term=.mrd7ODnEV#qqD7Xoa6Y]). [Boost your vocabulary](https://www.vocabulary.com/) [https://www.vocabulary.com/], [test your knowledge of geography](http://world-geography-games.com/) [http://world-geography-games.com/], [acquire random facts](http://www.todayifoundout.com/) [http://www.todayifoundout.com/], or [tour far-away locales](https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/10-curious-geeky-virtual-tours-you-can-take-on-google-street-view/) [https://www.makeuseof.com/tag/10-curious-geeky-virtual-tours-you-can-take-on-google-street-view/] and impress your friends once you've gotten off the couch.

Make a job of it

Can't see quitting the gaming world for good? Then build a path to getting paid for what you love. Establish [your own blog about gaming](https://www.cnet.com/news/top-ten-gaming-blogs/) [https://www.cnet.com/news/top-ten-gaming-blogs/], learn to [build your own video games](https://www.gameindustrycareerguide.com/make-your-first-video-game-today-using-these-free-tools/) [https://www.gameindustrycareerguide.com/make-your-first-video-game-today-using-these-free-tools/], with these online tools, or look into [earning cash as a freelance game tester](https://www.upwork.com/hire/video-game-testers/) [https://www.upwork.com/hire/video-game-testers/].

The point is, when you've found yourself in a slump, it's tempting to imagine you will someday swear off your bad habits for good. It turns out, however, that's not really how people change. In truth, the key to [changing any habit](https://safetynet.com/blog/how-change-bad-financial-habits/) [https://safetynet.com/blog/how-change-bad-financial-habits/] is to ask yourself what positive or appealing reward that habit gives you and to find another way to solve (or resolve) that need.

So if you are unemployed, avoid starting a habit of playing too many video games. Or replace the habit with more productive and rewarding online activities.



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