<http://lovingfromadistance.com/thingstodo2.html>

**1.Have a duct tape contest.** Making things out of duct tape was a bit of a fad at one point. *Mythbusters* even created an episode based on surviving on an island with nothing but a lot of duct tape. Working with duct tape is fun because it is simple and versatile (and waterproof) – so look up some tutorials and challenge your partner to make the best duct tape wallet, bag, costume, hammock – whatever. All it requires is a bunch of duct tape, and nowadays you can find all kinds of pretty colors and patterns on duct tape’s fashionable cousin, washi tape.

**2.Play Battleship & grid games.** Battleship wins major long-distance points for being one of the few games you can play together with the physical game. You’ll need to buy one copy and mail half of the components to your boyfriend, so that each of you has a copy of the board, colored pegs, and ships. Then you’ll be able to play over the phone or on Skype. Alternatively, you can play with nothing but a piece of graph paper and a pencil. Other grid-based games like the printable Grid Race (at [boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/67821/grid-race](http://boardgamegeek.com/boardgame/67821/grid-race)) are excellent because they are free and printable, and as long as you label the x and y axes, it will be easy to convey your moves to your partner and play the game over the phone. Chess, checkers, Connect Four, Quoridor, and Stratego also translate easily to graph paper, as do many other commercial games.

**3.Ask thought-provoking questions.** Good questions can lead to some very interesting discussions and heated debates. You may have heard of the game “Table Topics,” – well, it’s the same idea, but you don’t need to buy the cards to have a good time. You can come up with your own or pick and choose from online questions or from the “Conversation Topics” section of my ebook.

**4.Have an origami competition.** This requires nothing but a piece of paper cut into a square and a webcam or phone with a camera to compare final products. When my boyfriend and I tried it, we chose to make paper cranes. We followed the same set of directions online and took our time to try to make the better crane. My boyfriend got points for being much faster, but I won anyway since his crane looked like a pile of mush.

**5.Play 21 questions.** This is a go-to of mine since it is easy and can be played anytime, anywhere. One person chooses a person, character, or object and the other tries to guess who or what it is by asking yes or no questions until he arrives at the answer. Technically the guesser is only allowed to ask 21 questions, but my boyfriend and I throw that rule out the window and just play for fun.

**6.Play charades.** All that this requires is a webcam. One of you must choose a movie (or book or song or anything you like) and act out its title silently so that the other player can correctly guess what you’ve chosen. Charades is always a good back-up game if you are bored and have nothing planned, since it requires next to no set-up or preparation.

**7.Play the Newlywed Game.** This was an American TV game show on which couples had to answer questions about one another and compare their answers against their spouses’ secret correct answers. It was played as a competition between sets of couples, but you can switch it up and compete with your partner. Simply print and play my version of the game from my blog: <http://www.escapenormal.com/2014/10/09/long-distance-relationship-print-and-play-games/>.

**8.Take personality quizzes together.** There are quizzes and personality tests out there for every topic under the sun. Pick a few quizzes that interest you – anything from determining your spirit animal to which Hogwarts house you belong in, and compare results with your partner. A good site to get you started is [playbuzz.com](http://www.playbuzz.com/). It can also be a lot of fun to create your own quiz with your partner, and then share it so others can enjoy it too.

**9.Blind drawing challenge.** This is a challenge designed to see how well you can communicate with one another. Do an image search online for some abstract geometric shapes and patterns. (Or search for tangrams shapes.) Something that could work well is an image of two slanted rectangles intersected by an arrow shape, all inside of a circle. The partner who finds the image online has one minute to give instructions to the other, describing exactly how to draw the shapes. The second partner must draw silently and cannot ask for clarification. After the minute is up, compare the drawing to the actual image and see how well (or terribly) you did.

**10.Have list competitions.** The website [Sporcle.com](http://www.sporcle.com/)is great for having friendly trivia competitions. The many list-quizzes on the site focus on certain topics (for example, the countries of Europe, the original Pokémon, famous logos) and the goal is to list as many items within that category as possible within the given time limit. You could also do this as a pen-and-paper activity if you think of your own topics and use a timer.

**11.Do a snail-mail art project.** Complete an art project by mailing the materials back and forth. For example, one of you could draw a doodle on an item and mail it off – the next could color in the doodle and draw a new one. Repeat. You could do this with useful items like a white handkerchief or pillow case, or you could purchase something fun like a deck of blank playing cards, in which case you’d mail two cards at a time until the entire deck is covered in original doodles. When you’re finished you’ll have a functional and personalized piece of artwork.

**12.Play storytelling games.** Ah, the ancient art of storytelling. It may feel ridiculous to sit down and tell each other stories, but it’s tons of fun to weave stories together under the guise of playing a game. Some such games, like Sherlock Holmes Consulting Detective, are book-based (though expensive), and guide you through a fictional world, allowing you to direct the story based on your decisions. Other games, like the popular card game Once Upon A Time, require you to come up with the story, but gives you boundaries and inspiration in the form of keywords based around a theme. The game is affordable so you can purchase a copy for each of you and play via Skype.

**13.Play board games online.** Listing all the sites you can use to play board games would probably require another book. [En.boardgamearena.com](http://en.boardgamearena.com/)is one that has a bunch of excellent and popular games (popular in the gaming world, at least) like Hive, Coloretto, Saboteur, Jaipur, Seasons, and many more, and they are free to play. I have enjoyed using this site many times. If you need more ideas, check out [http://](http://boardgamegeek.com/geeklist/140673/exhaustive-list-board-games-you-can-play-onli) [boardgamegeek.com/geeklist/140673/exhaustive-list-board-games-you-can-play-](http://boardgamegeek.com/geeklist/140673/exhaustive-list-board-games-you-can-play-online-fr) [online-fr](http://boardgamegeek.com/geeklist/140673/exhaustive-list-board-games-you-can-play-online-fr) for a nearly all-inclusive list of free online versions of board games. Days of Wonder has some really wonderful games at [Daysofwonder.com,](http://www.escapenormal.com/2014/10/09/long-distance-relationship-activities-the-ultimate-list/%22http%3A)though you’ll have to pay for a subscription. Ticket to Ride is an excellent game so to start off with if you don’t often play board games.

**14.Play MMO games.** There are many more of these Massive Multiplayer Online games than I can mention – if you’re a gamer you’ll already know many of them (World of Warcraft, League of Legends, Call of Duty, etc.), but if not, then it can be hard to know where to start. Minecraft, the world-building and exploring game, is an excellent choice for people who consider themselves non-gamers. It is tons of fun to have your own private creative server where you and your partner can build a world together. Second Life, extremely popular with certain groups, is another user-built world where you can go to virtually hang out with others, though it lags and glitches terribly. Dofus is an old-school turn-based RPG (role-playing game) I’ve enjoyed with my boyfriend. MMOs can be played on your computer or various consoles. You just have to do a bit of research and find what’s right for you.

**15.Play (or make) text-based decision games.** Companies like Choice of Games (at [choiceofgames.com](http://choiceofgames.com/)) still make the cool retro-style story games that read like a book and allow you to make decisions after each scene, which will affect the path of the game. Read aloud a game with your partner and take turns making the decisions. (Or make them together.) If one of you is code-savvy, you can even use the site’s own programming language to make your own games together and upload them for sale.

**16.Watch movies simultaneously.** This is probably the single most popular long distance relationship activity, as it is so easy to set up and mimics the traditional in-person movie date so well. Get snacks and run Skype in the background so you can communicate during the movie. My boyfriend and I like watching documentaries together, and we always learn something new and find plenty to comment on during the movies. Watching really bad movies is also extremely fun – two amazingly bad films are *The Room*, starring Tommy Wiseau, and *Titanic II*. There’s nothing quite like bonding and laughing over something awful. Or choose a cartoon from your childhood that you haven’t seen in years – you can find a bunch of old shows on Netflix and just about everything has been uploaded to the Internet somewhere. There’s almost nothing you can’t find for free if you look hard enough.

**17.Play print-and-play games.** As a graphic designer, board game enthusiast, and someone in a long distance relationship, I felt that there really needed to be some more easily accessible and free board games that could be played without a dependency on Internet connections. Online games are fantastic, don’t get me wrong, but they don’t work in relationships that rely on phone calls or snail mail. That, and the fact that physical games have a certain charm that online games can’t capture, prompted me to recreate some games so that they would work well for long distance relationships specifically. I’ve uploaded these gamesto my blog at <http://www.escapenormal.com/2014/10/09/long-distance-relationship-print-and-play-games/>**.** In order to play, you and your partner will each need to print a copy and learn the rules.

**18.Have drawing competitions.** Using sites like [CoSketch.com](http://www.cosketch.com/), youand your partner can have a private place to draw together online. Follow the lead of the YouTube show “Morning Drawfee,” during which two artists take turns bringing to life the ridiculous suggestions sent in by their viewers. They draw things like rejected Pokémon, forgotten Disney princesses, and samurai birds. Keep your artwork saved on your computer so you can get it printed as a hysterical photo book one day. Alternately, each of you could draw your image on a piece of paper and show it off via webcam. (Note: it can be hard to draw on the computer without a tablet pen).

**19.Have a miracle berry date.** This is something that’s especially fun in person, but so unique that it will also make a good Skype date. Miracle berries (or miracle berry pills) are naturally occurring fruits that change how your taste buds react to sour foods and drinks and make nearly everything taste sweet. Lemons will taste like sugar-saturated lemonade. The effects wear off in an hour or two, but during that period you and your partner can have a great time tasting drinks, sweets, and savory foods over Skype. It’s best if you each have a spread of the same foods in front of you, because there will be shouts of “oh my god, you have to try this!” back and forth. (This activity is sometimes called “flavor tripping.”)

**20.Read bedtime stories.** If you and your partner normally have a bedtime phone call, consider taking an extra ten to fifteen minutes each night to read stories aloud to one another. Bedtime stories are fun and relaxing and can even teach you new things and give you a sense of accomplishment. Short stories work well, but this could also be a great opportunity for you to finally make time to read that novel that’s been on your shelf for two years. Cuddle up in bed and read a chapter over the phone, picking up where you left off the night before. One person may like to read and one person may prefer to listen, but you could also purchase two copies of the same book (or share a digital version) and take turns reading to one another each night. Alternatively, if neither of you feels like reading aloud, you could download the audio version of a book and listen to it simultaneously.

**21.Have Skype drinking dates.** You can play some of your old favorite drinking games together via webcam or take turns choosing new and exciting drinks to try. Test out the same drink recipes together or, for sophisticated folk, sip and nibble on new brands and flavors of wine and cheese or tea and cookies. This is the kind of activity that works well if you do it weekly or monthly, like your own private “drink of the month” club.

**22.Run outside and talk.** A Bluetooth headset for your phone or a simple set of earbuds with a built-in microphone will allow you to have tandem outdoor exercise time with your partner. Most of the time you’ll both be silent or huffing and puffing, so a good way to make sure there is some communication and opportunity for bonding is to set a time goal for your run. Near the end you can encourage each other and give updates on how many minutes and seconds are left. There isn’t much you can do to get outside with your partner when separated, but this sometimes does the trick. If you’re not a runner, walk while your partner runs.

**23.Hold a fitness competition.** The site [Fitocracy.com](http://fitocracy.com/) is an excellent tool for holding fitness competitions – with the ability to easily track every exercise you complete and give you an appropriate number of points per exercise, it makes working out feel like a real-life video game. You gain levels each time you earn a certain number of points and complete challenges, so it’s very simple to compete with your partner, though the site has a special challenge feature as well. I love this site and can’t recommend it enough. If you don’t want to use it, simply challenge each other to exercise more (without using the site) – set an end date and determine the winning criteria – for example, most sit-ups in two minutes, most improved mile time, etc. You can each work out in your own free time or set a time to work out together each day over Skype.

**24.Meld your faces together online.** There are a few sites where you can upload images of your face and the face of another person and see what you would look like mixed together. The point is to see what a hypothetical “child” will look like, but this of course is just for fun.

**25.Have double date nights on Google Hangouts.** Get two of your long-distance couple friends (if you don’t have any, have two of your in-person couple friends each get on his or her own computer) to video chat with you and your partner. Take any of the ideas from this list to form your double-date plan: watch a movie, have a competition, or play a hysterical multi-player storytelling game like The Extraordinary Adventures of Baron Munchausen.

**26.Write a story together.** Over the course of a day or week, construct a short story with your partner, one sentence (or paragraph) at a time. Start by emailing the first sentence to your partner; when he has time, he’ll email you back with your sentence and his second sentence, until a story unfolds. One of the couples I spoke to when writing this book loves this method of story-making, but I prefer NaNoWriMo, which occurs every November (with mini-sessions in April and July). During the month you aim to write 50,000 words and have access to one of the most amazing and supportive communities on the Internet. Writing the novel that’s been in your head while your partner writes his can be very rewarding.

**27.Play six degrees of separation.** This is another easy game to play over the phone. Each of you should pick an actor and then work together to connect them through no more than six movies. For example, Tom Hanks and Meg Ryan star in *Cast Away*, Meg Ryan and Billy Crystal star in *When Harry met Sally*, Billy Crystal and Robert De Niro star in *Analyze This*; thus we have connected Tom Hanks and Robert De Niro by three degrees of separation.

**28.Learn a language.** If you’re both sitting at the computer at a loss for new conversation topics, you might as well open a language learning program and go through it together, lesson by lesson. There are dozens of great free computer programs available now, but there are also many other options for your phone (like the free Rosetta Stone-esque app Duolingo) and for your car or mp3 player. So even if you can’t practice at the exact same time as your partner, you can still schedule little practice sessions together and apply what you’ve learned in real conversations.

**29.Draw each other.** Your artistic skills are irrelevant to how much you will enjoy drawing your partner. Take turns posing via webcam and drawing one another. Aim to draw a realistic portrait and just see how you do… if you’re not practiced in art you’ll probably end up with something really goofy looking that somewhat resembles your partner, and she’ll draw a lopsided, squished-looking version of you. Then you can just enjoy making fun of each other. With practice, though, you can get pretty good pretty quickly.

**30.Play photo freeze tag.** Make an agreement with your partner that at any time of the day, either of you can text the word “freeze” to the other. When the text is received, the receiver must immediately take a picture of himself doing whatever he is doing at that moment and send it to his partner. Try to catch each other in funny situations or just enjoy seeing what your partner is doing at any time of the day.

**31.Scavenger hunt.** Normally these hunts are done by a group of people who split into smaller groups and meet up at the end to compare results; the idea here is the same, but the meet-up is virtual. Find a few people in different locations who want to participate. Come up with a list of things you’ll need to find and take pictures of – such as a building more than 100 years old, someone in costume, your entire team in a tree, etc., and determine how many points each item will be worth. At the end of a designated amount of time, join a Google Hangouts session with all of the groups to share pictures and determine which team is the winner. This could be good if you have a lot of long-distance friends within similar time zones.

**32.Make bets.** Place some stakes on the goings-on of your everyday life: how long you can go without eating dessert, how much time you think you’ll spend on Skype together in a week, how many times the main character’s first name will be used in an episode of your favorite TV show. Decide in advance what the losing guesser owes the winner – money might not be a fun stake in your relationship, but massages, dinners, risqué rewards, and other personal goodies sure can be.

**33.Paint.** Paint-and-wine nights have been gaining popularity lately. The idea can easily be transferred to a webcam date. You and your partner will need some painting supplies and a simple painting tutorial to follow online. Set up your canvases facing your webcam, so you and your partner can check out each other’s work as you go along. This date can be sweet and romantic or it can be ridiculous; take a hint from Jenna Marbles’ YouTube video, “Jenna’s Drunk Art School,” for an idea of how funny a painting date can be if you pick your own image and don’t take yourself too seriously.

**34.Play “Would you rather?”** This is another simple phone-based game that requires no set-up. Simply take turns thinking of would-you-rather questions and answering them. How else will you ever know if your partner would rather be stuck on an island with his least favorite relative for a year, or lose the ability to taste sweet things forever?

**35.Research your family histories.** This activity is always fun but takes on even more meaning if you are married to your partner or if you plan to have children together. After you’ve gathered as much information from your parents and grandparents as you can, share it with your partner and take turns focusing on one family or the other, figuring out when and where your ancestors were born, where they lived, and what their lives were like. This hobby can be addictive, however, so consider yourself warned. [Ancestry.com](http://ancestry.com/)is a great starting point, though you’ll have to pay a subscription fee. Once you’ve gathered a decent amount of information, create a joint family tree to display in your home.

**36.Grow plants from seeds.** Owning a plant is like the easy, low-commitment version of owning a pet. Spend some time choosing a plant with your partner – maybe something you’d eventually like to have growing outside when you move in together, like an olive, fig, or lemon tree. [Tradewindsfruit.com](http://tradewindsfruit.com/)(where I get my seeds) has a really interesting variety of tropical fruit seeds you can grow at home – everything from dragon fruit to cherimoya to passion fruit. Order a packet of seeds (they are very inexpensive) for each of you and plant them at the same time. As they grow, compare their progress and share tips. It is a simple and very sweet way to feel closer to your partner.

**37.Play television-based games.** The next time you watch your favorite TV show together, make it a more active experience. Many popular shows now have corresponding drinking games – a Google search will show you what games already exist, but it’s simple enough to make up your own. A funny example is taping a paper mustache to the very center of your screen and drinking whenever it lines up properly on a character’s face. If, like myself, you’re not a drinker, you can play exercise games – do a certain amount of jumping jacks, a couple calf raises, a few seconds of wall squatting, etc., in place of taking a drink.

**38.Choose each other’s dinners.** You can have a regular Skype dinner date anytime, so every now and then try switching it up. Each of you should find a similar restaurant in your own area that offers delivery, ideally in a style you don’t eat often – perhaps Thai or Greek. Taking your partner’s tastes into account, secretly choose items from his restaurant and place his order for him (pay on the phone with your credit card), and vice versa. When both of your surprise meals have arrived, sit and talk while you dine or watch a movie simultaneously. For a little extra adventure, try eating with chopsticks or with your wrong hand.

**39.Help out others who put up with the distance.** You two know how tough it is to be separated, so work together to do something special for someone else who is separated from his or her loved ones and who might need some support. A good way to go about this is to put together a care package for a deployed soldier. Decide together what you want to include and gather supplies – though if you want to put them all in one package, one of you will have to mail your supplies to the other eventually. Alternatively, start something new on one of the long distance relationship forums and offer to set up a couples’ care package swap. Each couple could be matched up with another to swap date night packages for use during visits.

**40.Invent an activity and share it.** Many people in long distance relationships struggle through periods of boredom and just can’t think of anything new to do. So create a pen and paper game or a phone game with your partner (or write about something unique you’ve done together long-distance) and, for the good of all the distance couples out there, share it with the world. Submit it to this list so other couples can easily find it: just add your idea in a comment or submit it via my contact page and if I think other people would enjoy it, I’ll add it to the list with your name attached.