

# Ham Things to Try by WB5YYQ

Tonight's training is in two parts.

## Part A: Try something new

There are so many facets of ham radio, that if you ever get bored, you're not really trying. Try something new every day.

Here are just a few ideas to keep you busy....

1. Ham radio is not just voice communications; try a mode you've never used before.
2. There are lots and lots of digital modes that you can try: CW, RTTY, SSTV, FT8, PSK-31, Olivia, meteor scatter, Packet, APRS, Dstar, and many, many more. Free software such as WSJT-X, FLDIGI, and others, make this fairly simple especially if your radio has a built-in USB soundcard modem.
3. Setup a portable station at a state park and operate Parks on the Air (POTA). You don't have to go camping, just setup on a picnic table for the day.
4. Try a different band. Many modern day transceivers can cover HF, VHF, & UHF bands; that's 14 bands.
5. If you have a Technician license, you are not just limited to voice on VHF and UHF bands; get on HF. You can operate CW on 80, 40, and 15 meters, and add voice or digital modes (including WinLink) on 10 meters and above.
6. Work on upgrading your license to gain additional operating privileges and frequencies, increase your knowledge, and on-air proficiency.
7. Build and try using different antennas. Wire antennas are especially easy to build.
8. Have an Antenna Party. "Friends don't let friends build and raise an HF antenna by themselves!"
9. Step outside of your comfort zone, and participate as a net control operator or prepare a topic for the Monday night training net.
10. Check in to other nets, such as the Texas HF ARES net, or the Texas Traffic Net, or the Texas RACES net. You can find nets that are currently on the air using NetLogger software.
11. Try using a Raspberry Pi for various ham applications, such as decoding digital signals, monitoring DX Clusters for spotting rare DX stations, logging, and other general ham station activity.
12. Participate in the weekly WinLink exercises held by ARES or RACES. These are great for improving proficiency with WinLink and understanding HF propagation within the state.
13. Consider joining ARRL if you're not already a member. QST magazine is a treasure chest of knowledge. Members have online access to all prior issues of QST magazine via their website.
14. Build something, either from scratch or from a kit.
15. Design a QSL card
16. Participate in a contest, either just for fun or to win awards.
17. Seek out Special Event stations on the air, and try to work them. QST has a monthly listing of contests and special event stations in every issue.
18. Try to recruit someone new into ham radio. Neighbors, friends, kids, and grandkids are fair game.
19. Provide communications support for a public event, or fun run.
20. Monitor local repeaters or simplex calling frequencies in case someone needs assistance. It's sad when you put out a call while traveling thru a strange town, and no body answers.
21. Read your user manuals to fully understand all the capabilities of your radio.
22. Go to a Hamfest. It's educational, fun, and you'll find some bargains.
23. Become active with other groups, i.e., RACES, CERT, CAP, MARS, Skywarn
24. Purchase an old radio (boat-anchor), and restore it.

25. Work toward earning awards; Worked All States, Worked All Counties, Worked All Grid-Squares, etc.
26. Assemble a Go-Kit so you can operate portable anywhere, anytime.
27. Operate your station remotely over the internet.
28. Satellites. Operate thru one of the many orbiting ham repeaters, including the International Space Station.
29. Organize and re-configure your ham shack. Do you have enough power outlets? Are you tripping over cables? Is your equipment at a proper working height or do you get a pain in your neck? Maybe it's time to rethink your setup.
30. Try operating QRP. You'll be amazed what you can do with only 10 watts.
31. Learn something new and share what you've learned.

## **Part B: Winlink Exercise**

Compose and send a Winlink message to WB5YYQ and cc: KD5BJ, with the following information:

Subject: Monday night Winlink Exercise

Include the following info in the message:

Name  
Callsign  
Physical Address  
Phone number  
email address

Send the message via VaraFM or VaraHF. If you don't have a working radio - Winlink connection, send the message via Winlink telnet.

If you don't have Winlink installed, send your info via regular email to [WB5YYQ@gmail.com](mailto:WB5YYQ@gmail.com)