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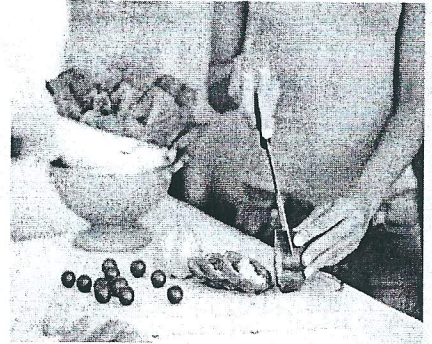
Just a perfect day: for a woman, anyway!

The songwriter Lou Reed famously spent his perfect day "drinking sangria in the park, feeding animals in the zoo, then later a movie, too, and home". But then, he is only a bloke. Women think rather differently, according to academics studying happiness and well-being. As well as eight hours of uninterrupted sleep, the

ideal day includes at least 56 minutes of shopping, 82 minutes relaxing and a further 46 minutes napping, a bare 36 minutes working and 33 commuting, not to mention the 50 minutes spent preparing food and 75 actually eating it.

The survey, carried out by scientists in the US and Germany, concludes that a little of what you fancy is good for you but a lot might turn your day sour. "Our research asks what a

perfect day would look like if we take into account the crucial fact that even the most pleasurable activities are usually less enjoyable the longer they last and the more often we do them," the researchers say.



Their conclusions were drawn from a survey of more than 900 women, average age 38, in employment, who were questioned about how they spent their day and

how they felt about it. The researchers also analysed data from a US Time Use Survey, which measures the amount of time men and women spend doing various

activities, such as paid work, childcare, volunteering and socialising.

Armed with this they worked out the make-up of a perfect day based on 16 waking hours. The results show that were people to be entirely self-indulgent and hedonistic, they would spend 103 minutes socialising and 74 minutes relaxing. They

would spend no time working or commuting, and only two minutes on housework, and another two minutes with the children.

However, the optimal day contains 16 different activities, each taking between 33 and 106 minutes. More time was spent on people-centred activities than on money-

making projects. According to the results, it is better to divide the day up into smaller packages of things you like to do, partly to avoid boredom.

