

No time to play?

Contributed by Sciurus
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Recently, I found myself to play much less. It is not that I lost interest in playing chess. However, it is simply hard to find 40+ minutes of uninterrupted time to play a game on the internet. It is relatively easy to find 10 min even on the busiest days to do some tactical exercises, but on most days, I simply do not find the time for a slow game. This leads to the question how much one can improve in chess without actually playing chess. The answer probably does not look favorably for me. Granted, I could get online quickly to play a blitz game. This would get me some practice, but I think it would also get me into some bad habits that would ruin my efforts to work on a thinking process. Therefore, I decided not to play blitz until I significantly improved my slow chess.

What are alternatives to slow chess games that do not require a big chunk of quiet, uninterrupted time? One thing would be to play against some computer program. In contrast to humans, programs do not mind being put on hold for a few hours. The drawback is that I am not sure how much this would prepare me to play against humans, which is more exciting, too. Another alternative is playing really slow chess games. About two weeks ago, I registered at ChessWorld and started my first correspondence chess tournament. With a time control of one full week per move I can play (or rather make moves) whenever I have time. Playing games that last weeks or even months, however, also requires a great deal of patience. I will write more about this once I have more experience with this form of chess. In the mean time, I guess that there is no way around trying to free up some time to play a few "live" games on the net.