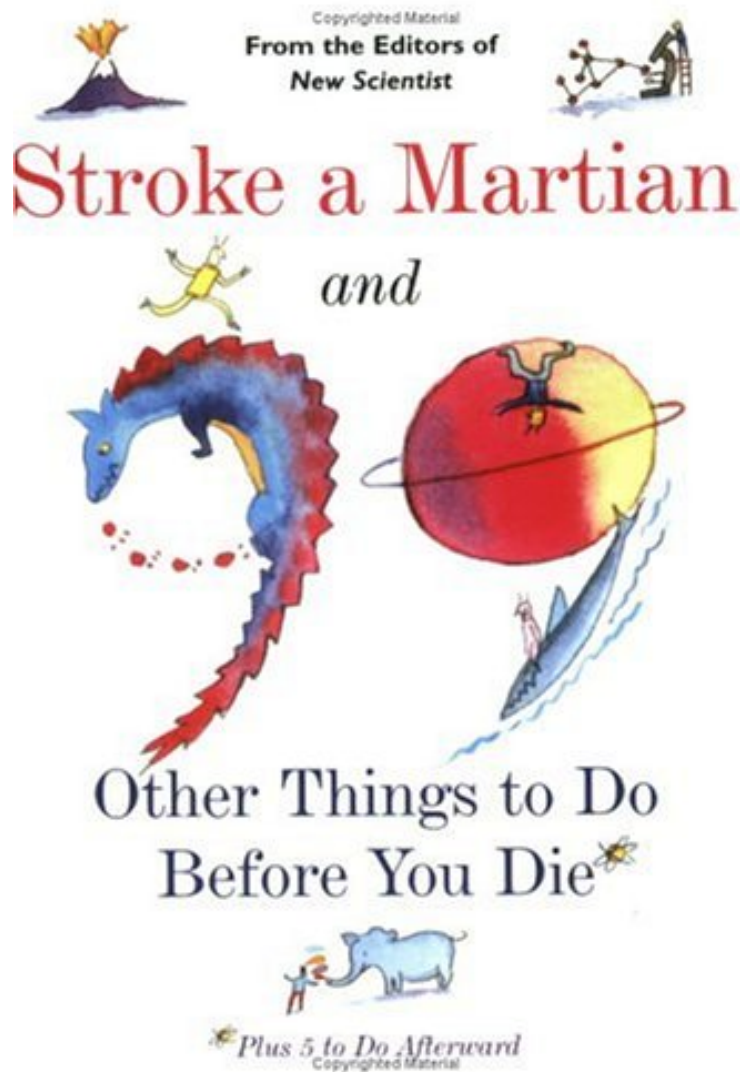


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Stroke a Martian and 99 Other Things to Do Before You Die: Plus 5 to Do Afterwards

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From Walker Books : Stroke a Martian and 99 Other Things to Do Before You Die: Plus 5 to Do Afterwards before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Stroke a Martian and 99 Other Things to Do Before You Die: Plus 5 to Do Afterwards:

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Mixed Bag of ideasBy Armin Nikkhah ShiraziWritten mostly by the

Editors of New Scientist, this little book presents, as the title says, a compilation of about 99 ideas for things one could do (or in some cases at least imagine doing) before dying and 5 things to do with your body afterwards (e.g. turning a sample of it into a diamond that can then be worn by loved ones). Given the authorship, it is not surprising that all of the ideas have a significant scientific aspect to them, so it is a fun way of learning some scientific factoids, although I doubt that most of these will be retained. Some of the idea articles are actually very short guest columns written by notable scientists, for instance the one on trying to answer whether the Universe is unique was written by Lawrence Krauss, a theoretical physicist who has written several books popularizing science, and the one on time travel was written by Anton Zeilinger, one of the leading experimental physicists on the foundations of quantum mechanics. I have the impression that the editors tried to provide a mix of ideas ranging from the utterly impossible (e.g. "Achieve Immortality") to ones so challenging that they are out of the reach to all but a tiny number of people (e.g. solve a Clay Institute Millennium problem or decipher the Voynich Manuscript) to ones that require significant cooperation from scientists (e.g. write out your name in atoms) or a lot of money (e.g. have your entire genome sequenced (at a cost of 10 million dollars according to the book)), to ones that require more feasible efforts such as traveling to certain locations (e.g. Kilauea on Hawaii in order to "Walk on Lava") to ones that can be done with relatively little effort (e.g. "Measure the speed of light using chocolate"). On the plus side, I liked the sense of humor throughout the book and the originality of several of the ideas. On the minus side, the fact that a significant fraction of the ideas involve doing things that are either impossible or extremely challenging means that the number of ideas one could seriously aspire to pursue is not as large as one might have hoped. It would have been more satisfying to either have fewer impossible ideas or, given the same mix, have a larger total number of suggested ideas, perhaps even with a small symbol categorizing the feasibility/cost of each. Also, some of the ideas have misleading captions, a case in point is the title of the book: "Stroke a Martian" refers to touching a sample of a martian meteorite at a museum. Nevertheless, this was an enjoyable quick read, I got a few ideas out of it, but not nearly as many as I had hoped. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. fun AND informative! By Emmalene Aubrey This book is not just informative, it is very humorously written! I found it to be a great read, especially since I have a fondness for satire. Some may call this a good bathroom book or coffee table book. Either way, it is an interesting read and worth paying \$3.99 for shipping. :)

A catalog of life-enhancing projects and activities Here is the best science has to offer the common man: 100 activities guaranteed to excite your mind, challenge your body, and fill you with wonder. The editors of New Scientist--one of the world's leading science and technology magazines--have handpicked things they would most like to do during their lifetime:- Swim in a bioluminescent lake. - Listen to an iceberg being born. - Measure the speed of light with chocolate. - See Saturn's rings. - Make liquid nitrogen ice cream. - Walk in a dinosaur's footprints. - Walk up walls like a gecko. - Taste the world's weirdest food. - See your own DNA. Some of these activities you can do immediately, some you can dream about, but every one will stimulate your imagination. From the amazing to the merely adventurous, the eccentric to the utterly memorable, they will broaden your horizons and make you appreciate the potential of the world we live in. And if you think life is too short, how about becoming a diamond or nailing a murderer after you die?

"A think tank of British scientists has come up with a new way of quickening the national intellect--a brain-taxing spin on the old formula of 100 things to do before you die." ?The Guardian