

## What can you do in less than 30 seconds?

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Most people in less than 30 seconds can do very few things. Watch a TV commercial; listen to a radio commercial, you get the idea, not a whole lot. However, Chris Hardwick, a student from Broughton High School in Raleigh, can solve a Rubik's cube puzzle in less than 30 seconds. Most people have trouble even solving the Rubik's cube, let alone being timed.

Chris first started experimenting with a Rubik's cube when he was in second grade, but said that shortly thereafter he gave up on it for about six years. Then, after rummaging through his closet one day, he found his Rubik's cube and wanted to give it another try. This second try lasted for about a week before he went to the Internet to find a solution for it. Since then, he has spent three years solving the Rubik's cube, and he has been speed solving it for about one year. Chris has been working on other faster and more efficient solutions, and is now working on his own speed-solving solution, which will hopefully be faster than the one he learned before.

The world record time is 22.95 seconds, set by Minh Thai when he was in high school in 1982. Chris's fastest times are in the 19 second range, with some "lucky" times in the 18's. A lucky time Chris explained, was an attempt where the blocks were set up the right way to where 1/5<sup>th</sup> of the solution was already solved, leaving less of the puzzle to solve, and therefore, a faster time to solve it in. You might ask that since Chris's times are obviously faster than the world record, why is he not in the book? In order to hold the world record, you have to reach that time in official competition, which Chris has not participated in yet. It took Chris 7-8 months, working on and off, to get his times that fast. Chris said had he been working on the cube consistently, it would have taken him only 3-4 months.

Chris is not alone in his interest in the Rubik's cube. He knows many other speed-solvers like himself and keeps in touch with them over the Internet. The closest one to him lives in Vermont, and Chris admits that his friend in Vermont

has had better times than he has. However, they are not in a bitter rivalry for the world record as one might think. Instead, they share tips and hints on how to get even faster times. Chris is also willing to share hints and tips, as well as teach others how to speed-solve the Rubik's cube. Some friends he has taught it to now can solve the cube in around 26 seconds.

Speed solving involves memorizing patterns and combinations in the cube, usually for 2-4 pieces at a time. There are 20 pieces in a Rubik's cube. Chris looks at the combinations and having already memorized them, he knows faster ways to solve the cube. Chris has also doctored his cube up. By

greasing it he can turn the cube pieces faster than a standard new Rubik's cube, which would slow his time down by a noticeable amount. Chris has also pursued other puzzles, some similar to the Rubik's cube and even more complex, and can speed-solve those as well.

Chris is a very nice guy and is willing to teach other stu-

dents how to solve the Rubik's cube, and you might be seeing more Rubik's cubes all over campus. Chris has already had a favorable response to his initial messages about starting a club (or just teaching others how to speed-solve). However, if you cannot solve the Rubik's cube, they also make colorful paper-



This is a Rubik's cube; they are difficult to solve

## I Like Girls that Wear Abercrombie & Fitch

ALISTAIR ANAGNOSTOU

Auspiciously making their entrance onto the fashion scene several years ago were Abercrombie and Fitch's carefully "aged clothing." As a longtime fan of aged wine, cheese, and vintage cars, when I first saw the faded shirts and jeans (best of all the "original" worn-off logo) the blatant stupidity of new pre-worn clothing played with my mind like a kangaroo in a n old person's home. But as I thought further, I realized the problem was more serious.

As a self-proclaimed "outdoors enthusiast" it pains me to see kids walking into the mall with their allowances just to buy a pair of jeans with torn hems that I could have made for them in just a few months of wear. Just think, you could buy new clothes, get your preppy look going on, and switch to pseudo-grunge, as soon as they start to fall apart, and that way get two outfits for the price of one, instead of modern-day America's half a shirt for the price of three.

Equally as bad are the shirts with logos that shout out "I'm a #\$\$@@ing mountain

climber, that engages in life-threatening but exhilarating sports" when the wearer really considers catching the DATA bus to Northgate their adrenaline-pumping experience for weeks afterward.

However, to play the optimist, this wretched marketing ploy could have some valuable applications. Always wanted a car with two dinged fenders and a missing hubcap? Now on sale for only \$36,000, or better yet, go to the outlet mall and buy a pre-worn dog; nobody will know Sparky hasn't been in the family for years. The extra bucks will be worth your friends' compliments on his scruffiness. Maybe, if this trend continues we could even have pre-worn children. Avoid the hassle of raising a child that's just going to grow up and become a mediocrity in a low-paying job. Just buy your very own human Cabbage Patch doll.

My recommendation to those who want rugged clothing is wear them yourself, go camping, climb a cliff, or next time you go for a romp in the grass with your playmate, don't be afraid of the grass and dirt stains, it seems they can only increase the value of your clothes.

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