

How to Build Your Social Network

Humans are naturally social - we crave social interaction with other people. Your social network consists of your friends, family, colleagues, and anyone else who you interact with on a regular basis. By expanding your social network or even strengthening your current one, you can experience many benefits. Some of these include an increase in overall happiness and an increased resilience to stressful events and triggers. Your social network can also provide emotional support when you are feeling down and a learning group when you need information or want to try something new.

Sometimes, it can be difficult to build and grow your social network, especially as an adult. You might have a busy lifestyle which makes it challenging to make or keep social plans. Maybe you feel shy approaching new people or are not sure where to start. Below are some tips to help get you started.

Ideas of where to meet new people:

- Join a club or hobby shop, such as board game shops, book clubs, and/or art studios.
- Join a sports team, sports club, and/or gym.
- Get involved with local online groups or communities.
- Volunteer with an organization you are passionate about, such as a soup kitchen or animal shelter.
- Reconnect with old friends or people you have drifted apart from. Maybe it is time you reached out to your old school or work friends to catch up.



Make each interaction count

Once you find a group of like-minded people who you can interact with regularly, be sure to make the most out of your interactions with them. The most important thing is your mindset. Each interaction is an opportunity for you to learn something new or relate to someone else's experiences or interests. The same strategy can be applied to strengthening your connections with your existing social network, as an open mindset can lead to higher quality relationships. Infrequent contact with some members of your social network is also okay, as you can still gain a new experience and maybe you learned something about yourself along the way.

Remember, if you find it difficult to expand your social network, you are not alone. There is no right way to make friends but hopefully using these tips can help make it easier and less stressful for you. Sometimes, an awesome friendship can start with a simple "hello."



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