

6 Benefits of Quality Time with Friends & Family



1. Friends Are Good for Your Physical Health

It turns out that healthy relationships actually contribute to good physical health. Having a close circle of positive friends and family can decrease your risk of health problems like diabetes, heart attack, and stroke.

Having strong social ties can also decrease feelings of loneliness, which evidence shows can take a toll on your longevity. According to a 2010 review, people with strong relationships have *half* the risk of premature death from all causes.²

Social isolation and loneliness are linked to a variety of health issues such as high blood pressure, substance abuse, heart disease, and even cancer.

2. Positive Friends & Family Encourage Healthy Behaviours

One possible explanation for those health benefits is that friendships can help you make lifestyle changes that can have a direct impact on your well-being. For example, your friends and family can help you set and maintain goals to eat better and exercise more. They can also watch out for you and give a heads-up when any unhealthy behaviours (like drinking too much) get out of hand.

Additionally, people are more motivated and likely to stick to a weight loss or exercise program when they do it with a buddy. It's much easier to get out and stay active when you have a friend by your side.

That friend may also suggest activities that you would not have considered on your own—thus, pushing you outside your comfort zone to challenge your anxiety.

3. Friends Give You Emotional Support

If you find yourself going through a hard time, having a friend to help you through can make the transition easier.

Research also shows that happiness is contagious among friends. One study of high school students found that those who were depressed were twice as likely to recover if they had happy friends. Likewise, kids were half as likely to develop depression if their friends had a "healthy mood."

4. Friends Help Build Your Confidence

Everyone has self-doubts and insecurities every now and then. But having friends who support you plays a big role in building your self-esteem, or how much you appreciate and love yourself.

Supportive friends can help you feel more confident by offering praise and reassurance when you're feeling unsure. They'll shine a light on just how amazing you are and how much you have to offer others.

5. Friends Help You Beat Stress

Everyone goes through stressful events. If you know you have people you can count on, you may be less likely to even perceive a tough time as stressful.

Spending time with friends and family can also help reduce stress. According to Harvard Medical School, "social connections help relieve levels of stress, which can harm the heart's arteries, gut function, insulin regulation, and the immune system."

Friends can also help you cope with stressful situations. According to one small study, when children hang out with their friends during a stressful situation, they produce less cortisol, a hormone released when the body is under stress.

As the song goes: "We all need somebody to lean on."

A lack of friends can leave you feeling lonely and without support, which makes you vulnerable to other problems such as depression and substance abuse.

6. Friends Push You To Be Your Best

Friends can also provide a positive influence. If you make friends with people who are generous with their time, help others, or are ambitious or family-oriented, you are more likely to develop those values yourself.

Great friends have the power to mold you into the best version of yourself. They see you and love you for who you truly are. They encourage you and push you to do better and be the person you want to be—your "ideal self."

Christmas time is a great time of year to connect with friends and family. And yes we may attend events where we drink and eat a little too much...but **RELAX** and don't beat yourself up over it!

Its just a couple of meals and you can get back on track once it's over...personally, Christmas morning I get up extra early and go for a walk, do a quick gym session, and then enjoy the day without stressing...then following morning, another big walk!

PS..our gym will be open Xmas morning 8am-9am if you'd like to pop in! Everyone welcome!

Daniel 😊