



Spring into an Active Social Life

Did you know that friendships can literally save your life? According to one study published by the [Public Library of Science](#), active social lives can reduce a person's risk of death by at least 50 percent. Close, supportive relationships are especially important to the physical health in older adults. In fact, according to a more recent [study](#), the lack of social connections amongst older adults is equivalent to having diabetes, in terms of increasing hypertension. This study reports that with each social connection an older adult makes, comes an additional benefit for their health. Likewise, the fewer social connections an older adult reported, resulted in a poorer health condition. Without social connection, our minds and bodies fall apart. With spring on our minds, here are a few tips to spring into an active social life.



Get Out

To have an active social life, one must get out. Whether that means literally getting out of the house or figuratively getting out of one's comfort zone, depends on the type of person. Try to go somewhere where you can meet new people. Sure, it can be fun to "people watch" at the mall or easy to blend in during a church service but

connecting with others is more than just being amongst other people. Join an indoor walking club at the mall or recreation center or sign up for a small group or study through your church. Take the next step to get even more connected, wherever your usual go-to places are.

Be the First to Break the Ice

Sometimes forming a new friendship is as simple as saying "hello." Someone must be the first to initiate conversation, so choose to be the initiator. Warmly smile when you walk into a room full of people. Make eye contact with others while waiting in line at the coffee shop. Be the first to introduce yourself. Sincerely offer a compliment. A great place to practice being the first to break the ice is in the line at the grocery store. Even if all that happens is a pleasant exchange of "hellos," you're building confidence in being the first to initiate conversation.

Look for Group Hobbies

Another way to meet new friends is to participate in your favorite hobbies or pastimes with other people. Consider your favorite hobbies and look for group classes that you can take. Instead of exercising alone at your local gym, sign up for a group exercise class. Join a garden club if you have a green thumb or look for arts and crafts classes at your local hobby store. Often, our closest friends are those in whom we share common interest. While pursuing your favorite hobby, you might just find a new friend.

Utilize Social Media

Social media is a wonderful way to reconnect with old friends or find new friends who share common interests. Create a Facebook account or utilize your current Facebook account to its maximum potential. Search for local Facebook groups that you can join, such as a senior-specific group or neighborhood group. Choose to follow local businesses, museums, towns, and/or libraries so that you can learn more about upcoming events that you can attend. Lastly, don't forget about

friends you may have lost touch with over the years. Look them up on Facebook to reconnect. While social media should never replace face-to-face contact with other people, it is a great resource to utilize to take the first step in making connections with others.

Volunteer

Finally, consider volunteering as a way to meet other people and perhaps make a few new friends. Volunteering provides purpose and can make meeting other people less intimidating as volunteers work together towards a common goal. Look for volunteer opportunities in your community, such as the library, local churches or charities, schools, animal shelters, hospitals and nursing homes. Make a commitment to volunteer at least once a week. As you meet other volunteers, befriend them with a smile and a warm “hello.”

[Visiting Angels of Boulder County](#) understands the importance of staying connected as you age. That’s why we offer a holistic approach that entails care for the individual, both inside and outside of the home. Our [Social Care Program](#) helps families stay connected using modern technology. Not only do our Angels provide another social connection for your loved one throughout the week, they can assist your loved one by teaching them how to utilize modern technology to connect with others. Our Angels can teach your loved one how to use a cell phone, how to text message, FaceTime, send an e-mail or Skype, create a Facebook account, and shop online or browse the internet. [Give us a call](#) to learn more about our Social Care Program, as well as other in-home care services we can provide for your aging loved one.

Visiting Angels of Denver and Boulder County, CO

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